

-- BIBLE STUDY --

-- Visiting with Jesus --
“THE SUFFERING SERVANT-KING”

for
American English Language Training Students
(AELT)

By
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BIBLE STUDY
VISITS WITH JESUS:
“The Suffering Servant-King”

Introduction

Seven Bible lessons, which present Jesus Christ as “The Suffering Servant-King,” have been developed in which the message of Jesus is presented by those who experienced Jesus by direct or divine revelation, daily encounters, listening, observing, working and fellowshiping with -- those who had a unique envious relationship with Him. The experience and witness of others has always been a very important source of information. We are totally dependent on those who experienced Jesus and knew Him best in order to know Him intimately and personally ourselves.

As we study together their witness, all of these special people of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, have included each of us in their wonderful experiences with Jesus and have been inspired to draw us into a unique relationship with Jesus.

Each lesson will examine the unique testimony of these who knew Jesus best beginning with the prophecy of Isaiah 700 years before Jesus’ birth, His parents and others at His birth, the prophet John the Baptizer, the Heavenly Father, the disciples (many of whom died for Him), and the Holy Spirit.

The selection and development of these Bible studies are predicated on the idea that it is through a relationship with another person that we get to know that person, he or she gets to know us, and that the relationship develops through frequent visits with that person. Each of these scripture passages illustrates how Jesus made a difference in the lives of the people who encountered Him. Through those who witness of Him, these scripture passages reveal who Jesus is, what His mission on earth is, what His priorities are, how others felt about Him, and how He felt about Himself. In all the circumstances in which humans encountered Jesus, He made a difference in lives -- sometimes obvious and other times not so obvious. Jesus said that He came to give us an abundant life (John 10:10-11); as the Suffering Servant-King prophesied by Isaiah, He did just that. When we know His mind, are transformed by His Spirit, and experience the power of His resurrection, we will truly live.

Jesus Christ as Word and Son is the perfect revealer of God. As the commissioned envoy of the Father He speaks with full authority in the Father’s name. This aspect of His nature is so far emphasized that even under the conditions of His mortal existence He is credited with omniscience and omnipotence. There is no limit to His miraculous power.

It is hoped that students through these Bible studies which reveal the dynamic experiences of those who knew Him best, and through the testimonies of teachers, the program staff, believers in classes, believers at other times among students, and through daily devotionals will come to know Jesus intimately and personally, historically, vicariously, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, will come to know Him as their Savior and Lord, and will love and serve Him all of their lives.

Theme: “Visiting with Jesus” through those who knew Him best, according to Isaiah the Prophet, Mary and Joseph His parents and others present at His birth, John the forerunner and baptizer, the heavenly introduction “this is my beloved Son,” the Holy Spirit’s introduction at Pentecost, Paul’s challenging introduction, and the testimonies of those who died for Him.

Presupposition: Those who knew Jesus best, had a unique experience with Him. Thus, each is fully qualified to introduce Jesus to us as based on his or her personal experience. They not only give us Jesus, they also give us a model for introducing Jesus to our families and friends.

Goal Statement: To present to each student the many personal experiences of those who knew Jesus intimately in the hope that each student will come to know the various truths concerning Jesus and will come to know Him personally and intimately.

Over-all Objectives: Students will

1. meet Jesus as the Messiah, King, and Suffering Servant.
2. meet Jesus with all of His many titles and attributes as the Savior of the world.
3. discover that Jesus Christ voluntarily laid aside His divine rights and privileges out of love for and obedience to His Father.
4. discover that Jesus became a man in order to fulfill God's plan of salvation.
5. discover that Christ died on a cross and was raised from the dead for their sins.
6. experience the Truth that God keeps His promises.
7. meet Jesus at work in themselves personally and at work in the world.
8. discover how Jesus and His mission is perceived by those who knew Him best.
9. learn that knowing Jesus as risen Savior leads to eternal life.
10. discover how a relationship with Jesus can make a difference in their own lives.
11. come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord and follow Him.
12. grow through these introductions of Jesus.
13. learn concepts relating to Christianity and how to apply them in their own lives.
14. discover the different ways in which they can develop and maintain a relationship with Jesus.

The Lessons: "Visiting with Jesus, the Suffering Servant-King"

Lesson 1: Isaiah's Introduction – the Suffering Servant-King

Lesson 2: Introductions of Those Present at His Birth – the Messiah

Lesson 3: John the Baptizer's Introduction – the Lamb of God

Lesson 4: Heaven's Introduction of Jesus – the Beloved Son of God

Lesson 5: The Holy Spirit's Introduction – the Resurrected Lord

Lesson 6: Paul's Challenging Introduction – the Visible Image of the Invisible God

Lesson 7: Testimonies of Those Who Died for Him – The Savior

Lesson Format:

Each lesson contains the following, in the following order, and are discussed in the following section:

The Principle Thought,

A Lesson Summary which contains a discussion of the content of each scripture passage,

Teacher Helps,

A "Set,"

Lesson Objectives,

Objective, Summarizing, and Subjective questions,

A scripture leaflet in English.

The information in the Lesson Summary is NOT intended for teachers to teach to classes but is intended to aid teachers by providing a background for passages, in some cases, and to aid teachers somewhat in the understanding of the scripture. Throughout the Lesson Summaries, all Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright ©1996 unless indicated otherwise. If other translations are used, they are indicated with a code which refers to References following all lessons.

The Scripture Leaflet for each lesson, provided in the appendices, is extracted from the *New Living Translation* (NLT). The English translation scripture leaflet is intended ONLY for those students who are at the Advanced Level in English. The NLT was chosen because it is translated into contemporary English which will be more readable and more easily comprehended by those who speak

English as a second language. The English translation, even for the Advanced students, should be used side by side with the scripture in the students' native language in order to make sure the Message is fully understood. The scripture leaflets in the appendices are ready for copying for students' use.

The Names of Jesus

The voice that the disciples heard during the Transfiguration said that Jesus was “*My beloved Son*” (Luke 9:35). This term indicates a unique relationship that Jesus has with God the Father. Elsewhere Scriptures call Jesus by other names and titles to indicate other aspects of His nature, character, and roles: (**SB** p. 76)

Name or Title	Description
Adam (I Corinthians 15:45)	The first Adam brought death through sin: Jesus, “the Last Adam,” brought life through His righteousness.
The Alpha and the Omega (Revelation 21:6, and 1:17)	Jesus is eternal, “the Beginning and the End.” Alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet, omega is the last.
Apostle (Hebrews 3:1)	“Messenger,” Jesus came to bring the good news of salvation to humanity.
The Bread of Life (John 6:35, 48)	Jesus is the heavenly manna, the spiritual food, given by the Father to those who ask for it.
The Chief Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20)	Jesus is the Foundation of the Church.
The Chief Shepherd (I Peter 5:4)	The title that Peter called Jesus, indicating His oversight of His “flock,” the Church.
The Christ (Matthew 1:1, 17; 16:16; Luke 2:11; John 1:40)	From the Greek word <i>Christos</i> , “Messiah” or “Anointed One.” Jesus fulfills the Old Testament promise of a Messiah.
The Consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25)	Jesus came to bring comfort to the nation (Isaiah 40:1-2)
The Firstborn from the dead (Colossians 1:18)	Jesus overcame death in order to give Life to believers.
The Firstborn over all creation (Colossians 1:15)	As God’s Son, Jesus rules over everything that exists.
The Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 14; compare Hebrews 13:20)	An image that Jesus used to describe His relationship to His people.
The Head of the Body, the Church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Colossians 1:18)	Jesus is the leader of His people and the source of their life.
High Priest (Hebrews 3:1)	Like the Old Testament high priest, Jesus stands between God and people to offer an acceptable sacrifice for sin.
The Holy One of God (Mark 1:24; John 6:69)	Jesus is the sinless Messiah promised by God.
I AM (John 8:58)	A name by which God made Himself known to Moses (Exodus 3:14), related to the verb “to be.”
The Image of the Invisible God (Colossians 1:15)	Jesus expresses God in bodily form.
Immanuel (Matthew 1:23)	“God with us” (Isaiah 7:14)
Jesus (Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:30; Acts 9:5)	The name that God instructed Joseph and Mary to call their Son.

King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:16)	The formal title that Jesus has received, indicating His supremacy as the One to whom “every knee should bow” (Philippians 2:9-11)
King of the Jews (Matthew 2:2; 27:11-12; John 19:19)	As Messiah, Jesus is Israel’s King, fulfilling God’s promises to David (II Samuel 7:12-16)
The Lamb of God (John 1:29, 35)	Jesus became the atoning sacrifice for sin.
The Light of the World (John 9:5)	Jesus brings truth and hope to light in the midst of spiritual darkness.
Lord (Luke 2:11; I Corinthians 2:8; Philippians 2:11)	A title indicating ultimate sovereignty.
Mediator between God and men (I Timothy 2:5)	Jesus reestablishes the relationship between God and people
The Only Begotten of the Father (John 1:14)	Jesus is God’s only Son.
The Prophet (Mark 6:15; John 7:40; Acts 3:22)	Jesus is the leader that God promised to “raise up” like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15, 18-19)
Rabbi (John 1:38, 3:2)	Friends and enemies alike recognized Jesus as Teacher.
Savior (Luke 1:47; 2:11)	Jesus came to save people from their sins.
Seed of Abraham (Galatians 3:16)	God made promises to Abraham and his “Seed,” whom Paul identified as Christ (Genesis 13:15; 17:8)
The Son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1)	Jesus descended from Abraham and fulfills the promises of God to Abraham (Genesis 22:18)
The Son of David (Matthew 1:1)	Jesus descended from David and fulfills the promises of God to David (II Samuel 7:12-16)
The Son of God (John 1:24; 9:35-37)	Jesus is one of three Persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).
The Son of Man (Matthew 18:11; John 1:51)	Though fully God, Jesus took on a human body (compare Philippians 2:5-8)
The Word (John 1:1, Revelation 19:13)	Jesus is fully God and therefore is the full expression of God.

Teaching-Learning Strategies

Teaching Goal

The focus of this approach to Bible Study is to enable students to arrive at their own answers as much as possible through a guided thought and discussion process, rather than by teachers lecturing and giving them the answers.

“Teaching” to many of us often means lecturing, explaining, and giving answers in order to get information across to our students and making sure that students “know” the information we want them to learn. When the goal is to provoke thinking, the teacher becomes an enabler, a catalyst, (rather than a “teacher/explainer”), creating an environment through which students learn. The goal as stated above starts with how the lesson begins by using a “Set” (see below), continues through the reading of the scripture passages and on through the discussions which are directed by questions. This is usually accomplished by question and discussion strategies. Questions lead from point A to point B in a somewhat logical sequential approach. Thus, students learn through their own subjective experiences by means of the leading and enabling process on the part of the teacher. This is not to say that the teacher should do no explaining; there are times when it will be necessary to present information that is not provided in the scripture passages. But “explaining” should not be the primary approach. “Explain” when necessary and try to keep it to a minimum.

Beginning the Lesson – the “Set”

The “Set” is a preparatory step (**not** an introduction) through which the student is subtly led into the subject to be discussed. It can be a question, statement, or picture with questions, a problem-solving activity, plus the ensuing discussion that is related to something in the passage that is to be read; therefore, the “Set” starts the student thinking about the subject or the primary thought of the passage without the teacher telling students what that primary thought is. It is a substitute for saying, “Today we are going to talk about . . .” or, on the other hand, simply having students start reading the Bible passage without any introduction. The “Set” can be used as well with classes where an interpreter is necessary; in fact, it must be used under any conditions to get the class going and to establish the desired thought in students’ minds.

Example: A “Set” for the teaching of the story of Jesus feeding the four thousand (John 6:5-15) might go like this. Offer the following question to the class, “Suppose you suddenly had two dozen people show up at your home at dinner time and you knew there wasn’t enough food to even start feeding them. What would you do?” You would probably get responses such as ‘We would go buy some food,’ OR ‘We would go next door and borrow some,’ OR ‘We would tell our friends to go home,’ and other similar answers. Then ask, “But, what if none of these were possibilities?” Be prepared to deal with responses like these in order to arrive at the idea that these suggestions would not work and to arrive at the idea that they would have to make do with whatever they had. Then, the “Set” would proceed like this – “Suppose that you decided to use the small amount of bread and meat, for example, that you had for sandwiches; and every time you put your hand in the package there was always more there to pull out, including some left over after everyone had eaten and was satisfied. What would you think about that?” Then, after responses and discussion, you would quickly relate this discussion to the experience in the story of Jesus feeding the four thousand and proceed with the lesson.

Each lesson will have a suggested “Set” for the teacher to use. A creative teacher should be able to come up with his or her own set. Students’ responses will determine follow-up questions and discussion. The “Set” should be kept short since it is only a preparatory step. The idea is to get students thinking about the “subject” that has been introduced through the “Set.” Then – the subject of the

scripture passage can be introduced, being careful not to answer any of the questions intended for the lesson. Following this preparatory step, the Bible passage(s) will be read, a few verses at a time and interspersed with questions.

Reading the Bible Passages

Except in the case of the most capable English-speaking students, the scriptures **should be read by the students in the native language** and questions asked through the interpreter who in turn will ask the questions in the language of the students. Less English-capable students may be able to “read” (“mouth” the words) in English, but often do not understand it sufficiently or even not at all. Even the most English-proficient students should read the scripture passages in their own language as well as in English to make sure of their comprehension. Longer passages should be read in sections and questions asked before moving on. Questions with each lesson will indicate the grouping of verses to be read.

Every lesson has a list of *vocabulary concepts* that may cause students (and teachers) difficulty. While it is important that these words be understood by students, it is not intended for the teacher to make a conscious effort to teach them. The important thing is that teachers should understand all the vocabulary items and be able to explain each one as needed. Observe as students answer questions to see if some of these concepts are not understood and then deal with them on the spot. Sometimes the apparent inability to answer questions is related to a lack of understanding of a vocabulary item.

Questioning Strategies

There are three kinds of questions.

1. *Objective questions* are those that are answered straight out of the reading material – often called the literal or factual level. These questions create a foundation for comprehension;. *Summarizing questions* are related to objective questions in that they are based on factual information within the scripture but are an attempt to get students to “pull it all together.”

2. *Subjective* (thought-provoking) *questions* are those which deal with the more important aspects of each lesson.

Each lesson starts off with objective questions which will

- a. be different for each lesson,
- b. be at the factual level,
- c. be listed with each portion of the scripture lesson,
- d. be directly related to and dependent upon the scripture passages,
- e. usually have right or wrong answers that come directly from the reading material,
- f. be for the purpose of laying the foundation for students’ comprehension of what is being read.

It is important to make sure that all students understand the response that is given. One student may know the answers but others will not. Ask follow-up questions such as “What makes you think that . . . ?” Or, ask someone else to verify a response given by the first student. In waiting for responses, we as teachers sometimes give the answer because students delay too long (or we think they do) and we get uncomfortable with silence; don’t rush, be patient. Avoid giving the answer.

Mixed among objective questions are a few subjective questions. Subjective questions often ask students to apply to their own lives what they have learned and discussed throughout the lesson. There are no right or wrong answers for these questions. The responses will come from students’ own experiences with their visits with Jesus from lesson to lesson.

Follow-up questions are of the Subjective type and are intended to be thought-provoking. Students’ lack of response often results from being afraid of giving the wrong answer. These questions should be asked in such a way that students do not live in fear of giving a wrong answer – for example, using phrases such as “What do you think,” “What is your thought about that,” “I really want to know

what you think about . . . ,” and other such strategies, as well as the way you respond to students’ answers.

By all means, resist responding to students’ answers to subjective questions in such a way that even remotely gives the idea that they have answered incorrectly, or even correctly for that matter. Be receptive to all answers. One way of dealing with responses that really are incorrect, undesirable, or “way out,” is to ask another student, “What do you think about what Diego said?” OR, “Irina, can you add something to what Diego said?” OR “Can you help Ramey with that?” In other words, students can help students. But, don’t allow students to put down another student’s response. It is beneficial for students to be encouraged to discuss answers among themselves.

The teacher should give every opportunity for each student to share understanding, feelings, and needs. Ask yourself these questions ahead of time and ANSWER THEM for yourself. It is important to think and pray during lesson preparation about each question and possible responses. Be flexible and adapt to each level of grasping. Don’t rush; be patient. Be prepared for “surprises;” sometimes students come up with answers that we are not expecting. Accept all answers. Draw out students who are reluctant, but do not persist. Students will respond to these questions when they are ready. In fact, you may wonder by the end of the week whether specific students have any thoughts at all about any of these questions. But, remember, (to quote an English idiom) “still water runs deep.” You just sow the seed; God brings about the harvest.

The following thought-provoking questions will be used for all lessons and appear with each lesson. They may be slightly modified or even added to in order to “fit” the specific lesson.

1. What does this passage say about Jesus?
2. What does it mean that Jesus is . . . ?
3. What does it mean to you that Jesus is . . . ?
4. What does this passage say about God?
5. What does this passage say to you about God?

Give adequate time for reflection and comment on these questions. Occasionally dip back into preceding lessons and connect some of the subjective questions with the current lessons by asking some of the subjective questions, perhaps during several lessons and from several lessons. Students will not come up with answers readily; in fact, some students will still be arriving at answers when all lessons are completed, if then.

Class Structure

This approach to Bible study is planned for approximately two hours daily and is intended for small groups of not more than ten students. During the first hour students should read the scripture passages and deal first with the objective questions. The objective questions are subdivided in order to ask questions after reading a few verses and then moving on to the next set of verses. It is important not to prolong the discussion of the objective questions since the subjective questions are primary to the lessons; however, it is also important to allow extra time for unplanned questions that come up. During the second hour, students will deal with the subjective questions; it is during this time that students personally deal with the scripture and make application.

The questioning process should not be limited to the listed questions with each lesson, however; each teacher may add questions when it is deemed appropriate. In asking impromptu questions, it is best to avoid “yes-no” questions. If you do ask questions that require a simple “yes” or “no,” be sure to follow up with a question such as “How do you know that?” The element of time will determine whether all questions of both types can be dealt with. If time does not permit, it may be necessary to skip some objective questions. However, be sure to cover some of the objective and all subjective questions for each lesson.

Teacher Preparation

The MOST IMPORTANT step in your preparation of these lessons is to think carefully about and prayer about how you have included in your own life as a Christian the testimonies of the various people – Isaiah from 700 years before Christ’s birth, His parents and others surrounding His birth, John the Baptist, God Himself, the Holy Spirit at Pentecost through the Apostles Peter, Paul, and John. Each of these people knew Jesus intimately on an everyday basis. Have you accepted these “introductions” in your personal life and what do they mean to you? Have you so thoroughly accepted all this that you can be yet another person who can introduce Jesus to your students?

In addition, you should prepare for each lesson by

1. Carefully reading and studying each Bible passage and relating the scripture to the objectives for each lesson,
2. Thinking about the intent of each lesson including the questions,
3. Making an attempt to answer questions for yourself in a subjective way,
4. Trying to anticipate students’ responses to the lessons and “surprise” questions,
5. Studying the “Set” for each lesson and decide how to use it or plan for another “Set,”
6. Reading and studying the Lesson Summary for each lesson.

Teachers are reminded that the Lesson Summary is NOT to be taught, but is only for background information FOR THEIR UNDERSTANDING ALONE.

Each lesson will have its own teacher helps and suggestions to include a “Set.” Teachers may want to pursue other Bible references and thoughts for study, in addition to what is given with each lesson. Teachers should have an understanding of each Bible lesson and the intent of the lesson before presenting it to students. A good Bible dictionary and/or commentary will provide helpful information on vocabulary items and other concepts in the lessons.

The thought-provoking questions are so similar from lesson to lesson, in fact some are identical, that students become impatient to these questions being asked from lesson to lesson. They have been heard to say, “You asked that question before.” At least you will know that they have been listening! The purpose of these questions is to allow some students to 1) revise their thinking about Jesus and 2) to help them develop an answer for themselves that is meaningful in their lives. Many of our students have never heard the name of “Jesus” or “God” and must think through what these Names mean. It may take them a long time to deal with the answers to these questions; others may already know what others do not know. Simply explain to students that their original answers could change with time. Explain to others who seem assured with their answers that perhaps they can help students who hesitate or are shaky in their acceptance of these Truths or simply do not know. It is desirable that ALL students answer these questions even though minimally. The acceptance of Jesus as personal Savior is an individual thing.

Lesson 1
Isaiah's introduction
The Suffering Servant-King

PRINCIPLE THOUGHT

The 'suffering servant-king,' as prophesied by Isaiah some 700 years before His birth, was prophesied to be, through His suffering and death, the Savior of the world. The servant would suffer not for Himself, but rather, to bear "our sorrows," "our transgressions" and "our sins." He was to come as a suffering servant and with all the perfections of kingship in Himself. The servant will be lifted up and highly exalted and will share the throne with God Himself.

Lesson Summary

Isaiah (7:14, 9:2, 6-7, 53:1-12), presents a picture of one who is both glorious king and suffering servant. This person is presented, on the one hand, as royalty who will rule the world, yet, on the other hand, he is also presented as one who is to suffer immeasurably and die for the sins of others. How can this be?

Isaiah, the prophet, in chapters seven and nine, was inspired by God and given the vision of the coming Messiah some 700 years before Jesus was born, the very one the people later rejected. The prophet experienced God's revelation of the Son of God, the Messiah, to be born of a virgin. Isaiah pointed out that the Messiah will free His people from their enemies and bring the actualization of the Davidic ideal. The vision included attributes and titles of the coming Son of God, yet the prophet later envisions the purpose, mission and suffering of the Savior in order to redeem His people. The *child* (vs 9:6) is the *Immanuel* (7:14). He is God's gift to man's predicament. He is fully human ("*child*," "*born*," "*son*"), but He is also divine, with all the perfections of kingship in Himself: supernatural wisdom, might, paternal beneficence, and peace. This Son will reign forever in justice, righteousness, and peace. The certainty of His kingdom is guaranteed by "the zeal of the Lord" (vs 76).

Christians have claimed Isaiah's "song" as its own. Never a Christmas rolls around but we hear these words as Scripture is read or it is sung by choirs. It is His song, and we sing it in thanksgiving for the fulfillment of that hope which burned in the weary human heart through centuries of darkness and pain, that God would visit and redeem His people. It has all come true: ". . . the people that walked in darkness have seen a great light . . .," on them has ". . . the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ . . ." (II Corinthians 4:6) burst forth. Timeless and universal, it is the song of the Redeemer and His kingdom.

To Him are given the titles no earthly king could hope to justify: the names of the Messiah belong to His very nature as one sent by God and standing in a unique relationship to God. For Christians the Messianic hope of Judaism is fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; verses 6 and 7 of chapter 6 give Isaiah's description of this Messiah:

- A *Messiah* Who will save His people;
- A *Mighty God*, divine in might, with a love for men that neither time nor death could destroy;
- Everlasting Father, a Father forever*, with constant care for His people;
- Prince of Peace*, one who came to bring peace on earth -- a condition of rich, harmonious, and positive well-being;
- A *Wonderful Counselor* more wonderful than any sage of the century -- the supreme fount of wisdom and "wonderful in Purpose" (compare 14:24);

A *Hero* strong with the strength of the Eternal;
A *Prince* in whose reign every fair hope of the human heart would have its perfecting.

The description in chapter 53 offers a sharp contrast to the description of the glorious Messiah that Isaiah prophecies in chapters 7 and 9. Here we see a suffering servant described.

We see such descriptions as “despised and rejected of men,” “a man of sorrows,” “acquainted with grief,” – the descriptions of a “suffering servant.” And then follows that he was “stricken, smitten . . . afflicted . . . by God.” In verse 5 is the image of the “suffering servant” as he is “wounded . . . bruised” – “pierced through” and “crushed.”

And then in verse 6 Isaiah points out that “all of us” were involved in the servant’s suffering. In verse 7 is implied the designation of Christ as the *Lamb of God* (John 1:29, 36) which we will see later from John the Baptist when he introduces Jesus as “the Lamb of God” to his own disciples.

The servant would be imprisoned, subjected to an unjust trial, and condemned to death. The servant suffered all these humiliations and injustices although he was absolutely innocent. The servant suffered not for Himself, but rather, to bear “our sorrows,” “our transgressions,” and “our iniquities” (vs 4-5). The servant Himself did nothing wrong to deserve this treatment (53:7-9).

But the servant’s death was not in vain. He had done the Lord’s will. The servant suffered on behalf of others. They share in His benefit, if they turn to Him as the means of forgiveness by reconciliation with the heavenly Father. In the long run His master returns to Him the status of kingship and His inheritance.

All of this God planned – it was the purpose of God. The explanation for the servant’s evil fate lies in the divine purpose.

Application

We have the hindsight to see and know the identity of the promised Messiah, Who has come and died for our sin. The sins of the whole world (Romans 5:16, 17) were laid on Him Who was innocent (II Corinthians 5:21) so that the guilty would be rewarded as if they were innocent.

The New Testament church saw its fulfillment in Jesus, and it supplied an interpretation of His baffling fate. The apostles preached their Master’s death and resurrection as the supreme disclosure of God’s love in offering His Son to die, the righteous for the unrighteous, to reconcile a sinful world to its God. This gospel was verified in their experience of forgiven fellowship with their Father, and in their victory through Christ over the world, sin, and death. Paul tells us that he preached that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture,” and that He “was raised again for our justification” (I Corinthians 15:3, Romans 4:25). Both cross and victory found their meaning through Isaiah’s prophecy.

But if we know all that Jesus did and still reject Him, our sin is much greater than that of the ancient Israelites, who could not see what we have seen. Two reasons why all men should believe are: 1) the ancient prophets reported it in detail and 2) the Messiah’s acts on earth supported the prophets’ claims.

John Calvin puts it this way: “In ourselves we were scattered; in Christ we are collected together; by nature we wander, driven headlong to destruction; in Christ we find the way to the gate of life.

Teacher Helps

Before getting into a discussion of this lesson, it might be a good idea to discuss God and the Bible. Many students have little or no concept of either. Take some time discussing God’s nature, person, and will. Try the exercise of having students complete the sentence “God is ____.”

Then discuss what the Bible is and what it offers. Again, as with idea of God, try with students the exercise of “The Bible is ____.” The following (from *Gideons International*) perhaps will be helpful.

The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter. Here Paradise is restored, Heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is the grand subject, our good the design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. It should be read slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. It is given in life and opened at the judgment, and to be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labor, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

Students need to be reminded that the Bible is a Holy History. God reveals Himself, His nature, His will, His covenant love, attributes and promises to His people throughout the Bible via the prophets.

Since our focus is on discovery learning, this lesson should be taught in such a way that neither the King nor the Suffering Servant is identified as Jesus. Leave open the identification of these two people, even to the point of not pointing out that they are the same person. If a "knowledgeable" student brings it up, neither confirm nor reject the response. The strong focus here is that students should draw from this scripture that the servant is a "suffering servant" and what that means; in addition, they should speculate how that same person can also be a king – do not confirm that they are one and the same person. Jesus will be identified in the second lesson; and each lesson will point back to Isaiah to see how (1) Jesus is both Suffering Servant and King and how (2) God keeps His promises in fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy.

The scripture readings from Isaiah are divided into three parts for exploring the idea of the Suffering Servant-King. Each part illustrates a different aspect of Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah which was to come 700 years later. It is suggested that you do the following.

Proceeding with the Lesson: Before doing the "Set," have students discuss how they would go about finding the most important and valid information about someone whom they wanted to know all about. What kinds of people would they ask – their characteristics? If students do not suggest the following, get around to the idea that the most valuable informants to obtain information from would be those who know that person best. Another important point would be that more than one informant, in fact, several, would be important.

Then proceed with the lesson as follows.

1. First, after studying the scripture, decide to use either the "Set" given below or come up with one of your own. Have students participate in the "Set" which will establish in their thinking the idea of a suffering servant who is innocent of any crime but will die instead of the guilty party.

2. Second, read Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6-7 which establishes a Person who will be born a king. Have students extract from these verses how this king will come into the world and what will be, from his titles, his attributes. In the process of going through the questions relating to this scripture it is important for students to speculate on what kind of king He will be and what kind of kingdom will be the result.

3. Third, read and discuss Isaiah 53:2-12 which describes in the first nine verses the suffering servant, then describes in verses 10-12 the suffering servant Who now becomes the "righteous servant" and how kingly He will become. Students should discuss how the "suffering servant" and the king can be the same person, if indeed He is or will be.

4. Last, read and discuss Isaiah 9:2 which talks about the "great light" which will come into the world. Students may or may not be able to connect this concept with the suffering servant-king, but encourage them to compare in their imagination how the titles of the kingly person in Isaiah 7:14 and 9:6-

7 could be this great light and what that means.

You may discuss the thought questions either throughout the objective questions or wait until the end of those questions. Let the Holy Spirit lead you in this.

Vocabulary: There may be problems with some of the words in the scripture that students are unfamiliar with, even in their own language. Do not teach these words, but be prepared to help students with them when needed. The following words and ideas may be stumbling blocks to students' understanding:

- Isaiah 7:14 Immanuel
- Isaiah 9:6 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father,
Prince of Peace
- Isaiah 9:7 Lord Almighty,
- Isaiah 53
 - vs 2 servant
 - vs 3 despised, rejected, sorrows, grief
 - vs 5 wounded, crushed, beaten, whipped,
- Isaiah 9:2 great light

As you prepare to present this lesson, keep in mind the objectives of the lesson (stated below) and attempt to achieve all of them.

Scripture: Isaiah 7:14, 9:2, 6-7, 53:1-12

Set

Tell a story of how an innocent person died for someone who was the guilty one. Elicit students' perception of an event such as this. Ask how they (students) would feel about it if they were the guilty person? The innocent person?

Objectives: Students will

1. Meet the Messiah, King, Suffering Servant through Isaiah the Prophet.
2. Describe the kind of kingdom this King would run.
3. Learn the many titles of this King and their meaning.
4. Describe the characteristics of the King through the meaning of his titles.
5. Learn that this king will have a special birth.
6. Learn that the king and the suffering servant are the same person.
7. Discuss how this person could be both a king and a suffering servant?
8. Itemize kinds of suffering this servant will undergo.
9. Observe how the suffering was looked upon by those around him.
9. Describe the overall picture of what this servant was to suffer.
10. Discover why this person was going to suffer.
11. Learn how this servant would accept all the suffering. (vs 7-8-9)
12. Learn what will be the result of the suffering. (vs 10-12)
13. Discuss the meaning of the "great light."
14. Discuss how the suffering servant-king could be "a great light?"

Objective Questions

Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7

1. Who are the characters in these three verses?
2. What are the characteristics of a servant?
3. What is going to happen?
4. What will this child become?

5. What is His name? What does it mean?
6. What kind of king will He be?
7. What kind of kingdom will He have?
8. If your country had a king like this what would be the condition of your country?

Isaiah 53:2-12

Verses 2-3

9. Who are the characters in these two verses?
10. What is being described here?
11. What is the condition of the servant?
12. Why do you suppose this servant is suffering?
13. What is the attitude of the people toward this suffering person? Why?

Verses 4-5-6

14. Who are the characters in these three verses?
15. What is happening here?
16. What is the misunderstanding in verse 4?
17. Why was the servant suffering? (vs 5)
18. If you were the person he was suffering for, how would it make you feel? (vs 5)
19. Who deserved to be suffering?

Verses 7-8-9

20. What is happening in these verses?
21. Who should have died?
22. What is the servant's attitude about his suffering and death?

Verses 10-11-12

23. Who are the characters here?
24. What is the result of all the suffering? Why?
25. Now what is the condition of the servant?
26. Compare the outcome in verse 10 with what happened in verses 8-9.

Isaiah 9:2

27. What is happening in this verse?
28. Examine Isaiah 9:6-7 for clues as to what this "great light" might be.
29. What do you suppose this "great light" will be?
30. What will the "great light" do?

Summarizing Questions

1. Compare and contrast these two persons – the king and the suffering servant.
2. What is the possibility that the Suffering Servant and the King were the same person?
Assuming they are the same person, how could this be?
3. Why do you suppose someone would so willingly die for someone else?
4. What kind of king would suffer in this way for his people?
5. How would you feel about being in this king's kingdom?

Subjective Questions

1. What is meant by a "suffering servant?"
2. What is the result of being "suffering servant?"
3. What would this "suffering servant" mean *to you*?
4. What does this passage say about God?
5. What does God mean to you?

Lesson 2 Introductions of Those Present at His Birth The Messiah

PRINCIPLE THOUGHT

The prophecy of Isaiah has come to pass: the birth of Jesus was part of God's divine plan. As the name "Jesus" implies, He came to be the "salvation of God" and, as Immanuel, "God with us."

Lesson Summary

What's in a Name? With us a name is often hardly more than an identification tag. Rarely is its meaning a major item. It is chosen rather for its association, as when a child is named after a relative or friend; or for its sound, as when we "like the name." But the Hebrews chose a name for its meaning in God – to acknowledge His gift, or to express hope or destiny in Him. Names then meant the nature, the significance, of the person. It is from the various titles given to Jesus at His birth that we learn something about Him.

"... You are to name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." The name *Jesus* was a fairly common name in Israel. It means "the Lord is salvation." His name revealed His mission, to "save His people from their sins." Matthew saw the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 7:14) in the birth of Jesus to the virgin Mary (1:23). This prime responsibility of Jesus is made the more difficult because deliverance from sin is oftentimes the last need we consider or desire. The baby Jesus would be born to save His people from their sins. Thus, *Jesus* is the name for the *Son of Man* Who is also the *Son of God*.

The title, *Son of God*, shows that Jesus has a special role in God's purpose, and that He is the expected Messiah. The connection of "Son of God" to "Son of the Most High" states Jesus' divinity.

Emmanuel is another name for Jesus: "God with us," (Matthew 1:23) to save and also to judge. Jesus was and is *Immanuel* as predicted in Isaiah 7:14. Jesus was God in the flesh; thus God was literally "with us." Through the incarnation, God comes to us as a human and lives in our world, rather than having us try the impossible of going to Him. Jesus does not take us out of the turmoil and pain of daily life, but rather walks with us as we live life -- sharing and bearing our sorrow, rejoicing in our joys, and carrying the burden of our sins. The point was not God's presence to people. The point was that Jesus Christ, who was Himself God (John 1:1), brought God to earth in His human body – living, eating, teaching, healing, dying. That's where Jesus is with us; that's where He gives us power (Acts 1:8).

Christ is yet another name for Jesus; it is the Greek form of the Hebrew title *Messiah*. Matthew is sure that Jesus is the fulfillment of Jewish hope and prophecy. He is Judge and Savior and King. But He gave to these titles a new, deep meaning: the Saviorhood was no mere deliverance of the nation from bondage to the oppressor, but a re-creation of human nature; and the kingship was rooted in divine compassion. The deliverance from sin which Christ brought was not by violence or by Mosaic threats, but by a cleansing and purification through His suffering love. These names are the index of Christ's nature.

It is in the announcement by the heavenly messenger(s) to Mary (Luke 1:26-38), to Joseph (Matthew 1:20-22), and to the shepherds at His birth (Luke 2:8-14) that we see **heaven's introduction of Jesus to Mary, Joseph and the shepherds – and then to us**. The angel's words recall the predictions of Isaiah 9:6-7. God sends angels to help certain people understand the significance of what was happening (see Matthew 2:13, 19; Luke 1:11, 26, 2:9).

Jesus' birth is recorded in the Gospels according to Matthew and Luke. Where did they get this

story? It had to be from Mary and/or Joseph.

Joseph's testimony: "An Angel appeared to [me] Joseph in a dream . . ." (Matthew 1:20) and said that

1. The Child is of divine origin, ". . . has been conceived by the Holy Spirit (vs 20);"
2. The Child's name would be Jesus, (meaning "The Lord saves") ". . . for He will save His people from their sins."
3. He will be called *Immanuel* (meaning, "God is with us").
4. He will sit on the throne of David (vs 27). He will be the promised Messiah from the line of David, and He is the Son of God.

Mary: The angel Gabriel appeared to Mary (Luke 1:26-38) and said that

1. "He will be very great,"
2. Will be called "the Son of the Most High,"
3. "The Lord God will give Him the throne of His ancestor David."
4. "He will reign over Israel forever. His Kingdom will never end,"
5. Jesus will be holy, will be very great, and will be called the *Son of the Most High*. (The word *Son* was a designation of the Messiah, the long-awaited Savior [Genesis 49:10; II Samuel 7:9-16; Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 7:14, 9:1-7, 11:1-3]).

The angel Gabriel told Mary that God had decided to bless her. He would be named Jesus, a Greek form of the Hebrew name meaning "Joshua," Just as Joshua had led Israel into the Promised Land (see Joshua 1:1-2), so Jesus would lead His people into eternal life. In Jesus' Name people would be healed, demons would be banished, and sins would be forgiven. Isaiah also said that His name would be *Emmanuel*. Jesus was born in the line of David and thus could be a king to reign over Israel forever. His will be an eternal Kingdom that will never end. Jesus Christ, a direct descendant of David, was the ultimate fulfillment of the promise to David (Acts 2:22-36).

All was done (the birth, the naming) to fulfill that which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet Isaiah (7:14), saying, "Behold a virgin . . ." Jesus was born of a virgin -- God was manifested in the flesh among men, and the living bond of holy and most intimate fellowship between God and men from henceforth and forever.

This reveals two important facts.

- (1) In Jesus, God began a "new creation," for through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, sin's power would be broken.
- (2) In Jesus, people can come to God for a personal relationship and be freed from the power of sin.

Jesus was God's Son before He was ever conceived in Mary's womb. God's Son was born God's Son.

He did not become God's Son at a later time.

He was not accepted as God's Son because of good behavior or obedience.

He was not a man promoted to that position.

Jesus did not become God's Son as His baptism, or at the Transfiguration, or at the temptation.

. In the birth of Jesus, God Himself became human and entered the world – for fallen human beings! Therein lies the miracle!

The Virgin Birth is important to the Christian faith because

Jesus Christ, God's Son, had to be free from the sinful nature passed on to all other human beings by Adam;

Jesus was born of a woman, He was a human being; but as the Son of God, Jesus was born without any trace of human sin; He is both fully human and fully divine.

Jesus lived as a man, we know that He fully understands our experiences and struggles (Hebrews 4:15-16).

He is God, He has the power and authority to deliver us from sin (Colossians 2:13-15). We can tell Jesus all our thoughts, feelings, and needs. He has been where we are now, and He has the ability to help.

The Shepherds: The angels said to the shepherds that Jesus would be

1. “. . . The Savior,”

2. “The Messiah” (Luke 2:11).

3. The angels brought a “great joy . . . for unto you is born” – to you shepherds, to Israel, to mankind (compare Isaiah 9:6) -- “Christ the Lord,” literally, “Christ Lord,” a magnificent name. This “Lord” probably corresponds to the Hebrew “Jehovah” or “Yahweh.” Thus, *Messiah* is *Yahweh*.

The shepherds, after running to see the baby for themselves, testified that *Jesus is your Messiah, your Savior* – introducing Jesus to their friends and neighbors **and to us**.

Simeon: Simeon, to whom God revealed the truth about Jesus, testifies of the divinity of Jesus and of His arrival as Messiah and confirmed the baby’s identity. Simeon was spiritually in tune with God. Simeon’s recognition and adoration of Jesus confirmed to Luke’s readers (and to us) that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

God had ordained Simeon’s meeting in the Temple with Mary and Joseph and the baby, in keeping with His promise to Simeon (Luke 2:26); Simeon praised God that He had done what He promised.

Simeon’s message confirmed

1) Jesus’ identify as God’s Messiah.

2) It showed that Jesus

Would be salvation “the Savior (Luke 2:30),”

Would be a Light to the Gentiles (Luke 2:32; Isaiah 9:2, 42:6);

And He was appointed to fulfill the promises of Isaiah.

3. There would not be overwhelming acceptance of the promised Messiah – in fact, many would not recognize Him and would reject Him altogether as Isaiah had pointed out (Luke 2:34; Isaiah 53:3).

Everything that Simeon said can be found in what Isaiah said 700 years earlier.

Simeon announced Jesus as “He is the glory of . . . Israel (vs 32).” He told Mary that Jesus would be “the greatest joy to many” people (vs 34), but that a sword would pierce her soul (vs 35). Mary would experience great pain when Jesus died (the “suffering servant” of Isaiah 53). Mary would be the only person on earth who would witness both His birth and His death.

Zechariah: Even as Zechariah speaks, at John the Baptizer’s birth, the Messiah was already being “sent” through Mary, for God had begun to set His plans into motion with the impending birth of Jesus.

Zechariah, his father, filled with the Holy Spirit Zechariah (Luke 1:69-71), praising God and prophesied. Zechariah’s words are a reminder that

1. Jesus came as the fulfillment of all God’s purposes and promises in the Old Testament;

2. God sent us a mighty Savior from the royal line of His servant David, speaking to Jesus’ Kingship which was prophesied 700 years earlier by Isaiah (9:7). The “royal line of . . . David” refers to the ancestral line through whom the Messiah was to come, as God had said through His holy prophets, and as Isaiah had prophesied, that this Messiah would be a royal king (Isaiah 9:6-7).

Application

Jesus means “the Lord saves.” Jesus came to earth to save us because we can’t save ourselves from sin and its consequences. No matter how good we are, we can’t eliminate the sinful nature present in all of us. Only Jesus can do that. Jesus didn’t come to help people save themselves; He came to be their Savior from the power and penalty of sin through His death on the cross for our sin.

Emmanuel means “God with us.” Jesus was God in the flesh – He brought God to earth in His human body. That’s where Jesus is with us and He gives us power.

Teacher Helps

It will be the purpose of this lesson to bring students to the conclusion that

- Isaiah’s prophecy is fulfilled in the birth of Jesus,
- That Jesus is both the Suffering Servant and the King, and
- That God keeps His promises.

Students should be guided to pick out titles given to Jesus as well as descriptive phrases which point to this Truth. Keep an on-going list from day to day of titles and attributes contributed by students which answer the question “Who is Jesus?” Then refer to it often.

In this lesson we have the testimonies of Jesus’ parents, of the angels to the shepherds, of Zechariah (John the Baptizer’s father), and of Simeon when he saw the Baby Jesus in the temple – each of whom had a great deal to say about Who Jesus is and what His purpose on earth was to be. Therefore there are five sets of scripture readings in this lesson to be worked through. It is suggested that you present the lesson in the following way.

1. First, after studying the scripture, decide to use either the “Set” given below or come up with one of your own. Have students participate in the “Set” which will establish in their thinking something of an introductory idea of what is to come in the scripture.

2. Second, read and discuss Matthew 1:18 and Luke 1:26-35, and 38. This is the testimony which Mary gives. From these passages students should extract the name of Jesus and the ideas that Jesus was born miraculously, is of royal lineage (humanly speaking), and He is divine.

3. Second, read and discuss Matthew 1:19-25. This passage gives us the testimony of Joseph who was to be Jesus’ earthly father. From this passage students should extract the purpose for Jesus’ birth and the meaning of His being called Immanuel. Students should be reminded of Isaiah 7:14.

4. Third, read and discuss Luke 2:6-7, 8-11 which gives us the story of the announcement of Jesus’ birth by the angels to the shepherds. Jesus here is called “Savior,” “Messiah,” “the Lord.” Students must discuss each of these titles in the light of Mary’s and Joseph’s testimonies.

5. Third, read and discuss Luke 1:67-75 which gives the prophecy of Zechariah at the birth of his son John the Baptizer who was to be the forerunner of Jesus, yet to be born. Here Zechariah is talking about Jesus, the one of whom John will speak. Students need to note that “Savior” is used again as a descriptive term for Jesus and that He is royalty. The second portion of this scripture (verses 71-75) talks about how God has been faithful and kept His promises to His people and is now keeping His promise again through the birth of Jesus.

6. Last, read and discuss Luke 2:25-35, the last of the scripture passages for this lesson. This passage describes how, when the infant Jesus was taken to the Temple for dedication, Simeon, a prophet who lived in the Temple, testifies to the identity of Jesus. Here we see the concept of “Light” applied to Jesus, as well as Savior, and the explanation of what the purpose of the Light is (as Isaiah testified).

Following the completion of this lesson (and subsequent lessons) have students add to the on-going list the titles and attributes of Jesus and attach meaning to each.

Vocabulary: Keep in mind the possibility that the following words and phrases may be unfamiliar to some students. Do not teach these words ahead of time, but be prepared to help students when needed. These words and ideas may be stumbling blocks to students’ understanding:

Matthew 1

(Luke 1 continued)

vs 18, 21: Jesus, Messiah , Savior
vs 20: conceived
vs 23: Immanuel
vs 32: Son of the Most High
vs 35: Son of God

vs 69 royal line
vs 72 merciful
vs 73 covenant
vs 75 holiness, righteousness

Luke 1

vs 27: virgin
vs 32: throne
vs 33: reign, Kingdom
vs 35: Holy Spirit
vs 26: angel
vs 67: prophecy

Luke 2

vs 7 manger, inn
vs 8: shepherds
vs 25 devout
vs 27: Temple
vs 34: rejected, undoing
vs 32: Light, Glory, Israel
vs 35: sword, pierce, soul

As you prepare to present this lesson, keep in mind the objectives of the lesson (stated below) and attempt to achieve all of them.

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-35, 38, 67-70; 2:6-11, 25-35

Set

Let students talk for a few minutes about what they know about angels. Then ask, “Suppose an angel appeared to you and told you something. How would you feel about that.” Let students respond to this for a few minutes.

Then tell them that what they are going to read about is just that kind of situation. Then move into the scripture reading.

Objectives: Students will

1. Learn Who this baby is.
2. Learn that there is something peculiar about this baby’s birth.
3. Learn why this baby is being born?
4. Learn the result of this baby’s birth.
5. Describe the overall picture of Jesus that Mary gives.
6. Describe the overall picture of Jesus that Joseph gives.
7. Describe the overall picture of Jesus that the Angels give.
8. Describe the overall picture of Jesus that Zechariah gives.
9. Describe the overall picture of Jesus that Simeon gives.
10. Compare and contrast the five messages.
11. Learn about this baby through the descriptive names given Him. (Jesus, Savior, Son of the Most High, Son of God, Messiah, Immanuel, a Light, Glory)
12. Observe how God spoke to and acted through Mary and Joseph in giving us Jesus.
13. Connect this account with the prophecy of Isaiah.
14. Conclude that Jesus is both the Suffering Servant and King.
15. Observe that God keeps His promise of the coming Messiah
16. Learn that God is unlimited in how He does His will and plan in our lives.

Objective Questions

Mary’s Testimony --

Matthew 1:18, Luke 1:26-35, 38:

Matthew 1:18 and Verses 26-27

1. Who are the characters in these three verses?

2. What is happening?
3. What kind of man is Mary going to marry?

Verses 28-30

4. What is happening here?
5. What did the angel tell Mary?
6. How would you feel if an angel suddenly appeared to you and said “don’t be afraid?”
7. What does “favorable woman” mean?

Verses 31-33

8. What does the angel tell Mary is going to happen?
9. What kind of a man will this Son become?

Verses 34-35

10. What is Mary’s problem?
11. How does the angel resolve this problem?

Verse 38

12. What was Mary’s final attitude?

Joseph’s Testimony --

Matthew 1:19-25

Verses 19-21

13. Who are the characters here?
14. What was Joseph’s problem and how was he going to resolve it?
15. What happened?
16. What was Joseph told?
17. How does this compare and contrast with what Mary was told?

Verses 22-23

18. Why is this baby being born?
19. How is this like the verses in Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7 (read these verses again if needed)

Verses 24-25

20. What is the result of Joseph’s discussion with the angel?

The Shepherd’s Experience with the Angels and Their Testimony --

Luke 2:6-7, 8-11

Verses 6-7

21. What happened in these verses?

Verses 8-11

22. Who are the characters in these verses?
23. What happened?
24. What did the angels tell the shepherds?
25. How is their message like the message received from the angel by Mary and Joseph?
26. What do we know about this baby thus far? (make a list of the responses)
27. What kind of man will He be?
28. What will He do for His world?

Zechariah’s Testimony --

Luke 1:67-70

Verses 67-70

29. Who is speaking?
30. Who is Zechariah talking about?
31. What is Zechariah saying about Him?
32. What kind of person will this Man become?
33. How does this remind you of Isaiah’s writings?

Verses 71-75

34. Who is Zechariah talking about in these verses?
35. What kinds of things has God done in history?

36. What is Zechariah saying about God?
37. What does this say about God's character?

Simeon's Testimony --

Luke 2:25-35

Verses 25-26

38. Who are the characters here?
39. What did Simeon want?

Verses 27-32

40. Who are the characters in these verses?
41. Where were they?
42. How did Simeon characterize Jesus?

Verses 33-35

43. What else did Simeon say about Jesus?
44. How does Simeon's description of Jesus remind you of Isaiah's words?

Summarizing Questions

1. What are the descriptive names given to Jesus? What do they mean?
2. How does this bring Isaiah to mind?
3. Is Jesus the Suffering Servant or the King, or neither? Why?
4. How is this fulfilling Isaiah 9:17? ("God guarantees it")
5. What does this say about God keeping His promises?

Subjective Questions

1. What does this passage say about Jesus?
2. What does it mean that Jesus is the Messiah, the Lord?
3. What does this mean to you personally?
4. What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of the Most High?
5. What does this mean to you personally?
6. What does it mean that Jesus is called "Immanuel?"
7. What does this mean to you personally?
8. What does it mean that Jesus is the Savior?
9. What does this mean to you personally?
10. What is the message in this lesson that affects you most? (What is most meaningful about these words?)
11. What should all this mean to human beings?
12. What does this passage say about God?
13. What does it mean to you that Jesus is Messiah, the Lord, Son of the Most High, "Immanuel," Savior?

Lesson 3

John the Baptizer's Introduction of Jesus The Lamb of God

PRINCIPLE THOUGHT

John the Baptizer introduced Jesus' as the Son of God, acknowledged Jesus' role as the Light Who will guide us to the path of peace, pointed out that Jesus is the Lamb of God Who will take away the sins of the world, and the One Who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Lesson Summary

What did John the Baptist say about Jesus?

Jesus is the *Lamb of God* (John 1:29),

Jesus is the *Messiah*,

Jesus is the *Son of God* (vs 34).

It would appear that John heard God say, "This is my beloved Son; I am well pleased with Him" and saw the descent of the Spirit of God, representing the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Matthew 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; John 1:32).

Two things are said of John the Baptizer: 1) that he was commissioned by God; John was the witness through whom God made plain the divine Sonship of Jesus (vs 32-34), and 2) that his mission was limited to testimony. The immediate purpose of the mission is to bear witness to the Light. The underlying object is that all might believe through him. John is merely the herald and witness, bearing testimony to the nature and titles of Jesus. The testimony of John, according to John's Gospel, brought to Jesus His first disciples, through whom that apostolic witness went forth, which in time was to spread through all the world.

Jesus is the human expression of God. He is Light and Flesh (vs 4-5, 14). To see Jesus is to see God, and to know Jesus is to experience God's grace and truth. Paul says Jesus is the "visible image of the invisible God . . ." (Colossians 1:15). John was merely God's "voice" for the important message that God was sending to His people -- all humankind (3:2) -- to "Prepare a pathway of the Lord's coming," to prepare to meet Jesus.

1. God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Messiah, a herald proclaiming news of the coming King, the Messiah (3:1-2). He pointed people to Jesus, their long-awaited Messiah.
3. John the Baptist's function was to tell everyone about the Light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony.

John's message had a twofold thrust (Matthew 3:2): First, he focused on one message -- preparing hearts for the coming Messiah. Preparation could occur only through repentance -- which meant turning away from sins and turning to God. In short, he wanted people to repent and be saved. This directed listeners to acknowledge their guilt (3:6) and change the attitudes of their hearts.

Second, his end-time message, "the Kingdom of Heaven is near (3:2)," had to do with the fulfillment of God's promise to David of a messianic kingdom (II Samuel 7:12-16). Through his ministry, John the Baptist became the "voice shouting in the wilderness" (3:3), foreseen in Isaiah 40:3. He came as the messianic forerunner, the one sent ahead to announce the Messiah's coming.

John's activity is regarded as fulfilling Old Testament prophecy. What had been seen and recognized by Simeon would become a universal experience.

John, from among a long line of witnesses that stretches through the centuries to this day, was the

first to point people to Christ; so in a very real sense, all who have come to believe have done so because of his witness. John himself was not the Light, as he told his audience, but he came as a witness to the Light.

Though John had not yet clearly seen the Messiah, he knew that the Messiah was coming and that his mission was to point Jesus out to Israel.

As John would soon explain, God had sent John to baptize and to prepare the way for the Messiah. This same God promised to reveal the Messiah to John. As promised, God provided the sign of the Spirit descending upon Jesus. At Jesus' baptism (John 1:31-34), John indicates that the action of the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and the voice from heaven speaking an Old Testament prophecy (Mark 1:11; Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 2:1) was a sign for John that proved to him Jesus' identity (1:33). Only John and Jesus saw this (see Matthew 3:16). The other Gospel writers tell us that a voice accompanied this divine sign (Matthew 3:17).

In well-known prophetic passages, the Messiah was depicted as having the Spirit resting upon Him (see Isaiah 11:1-2, 61:1).

He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and reveal the identify of the promised Messiah (see Isaiah 44:3; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Joel 2:28-29).

John, therefore, declared Jesus to be the Messiah.

John's Witness

John 1:16 shows John's official witness to Jesus before all Israel but begins proper with John 1:19. The center of it all is vs 32.

John's denials (John 1:29-34) that perhaps he was Elijah returned from the dead or that he was a Prophet, clear the way for true testimony of Jesus to begin, an account in John's own words confessing the identity of Jesus. John declared Christ's eternal existence (Micah 5:2) and His preeminence is preferred before me: for He was before me [John]— i.e., Jesus has priority over me [John] because He existed before me [John] (see 8:58)

In John 1:29, John the Baptist employed a beautiful metaphor to depict the way he saw his relationship with Jesus the Christ. He described himself as being the bridegroom's friend – or, as we would say today, “the best man.” As the best man, John enjoyed seeing his friend, the bridegroom, honored. He insisted that all the attention should go to the bridegroom and His bride.

The testimony of John continues as he now directs his disciples to follow Jesus (1:35-42); John sees Jesus and repeats the identification given at Jesus' baptism. He then ushers his disciples into Jesus' company.

On the day following the baptism John made a threefold declaration: Jesus was

- 1) the sin-bearing Lamb of God (vs 29),
- 2) the One Who was to baptize with the Spirit (vs 33), and
- 3) the Son of God (vs 34).

John emphasized Jesus as the One on whom the Holy Spirit would remain – the very Son of God, who would baptize in the Spirit and Who would be the Lamb of God.

John's recognition of Jesus as the Messiah before His baptism (Matthew 3:14) was confirmed when the dove descended and the voice from heaven spoke an Old Testament prophecy (Mark 1:11; Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 2:1). At Jesus' baptism what Christ Himself did was not the central thing, but what God the Father did. John's account states that the Spirit descended and *remained* on Jesus; John was as certain as if he had seen with his bodily eyes, as sure as if he had heard audible words, that God had accepted Christ's offering of Himself, was going to use Him for tremendous ends, and was promising to supply all that could be needed to bring Him through the unthinkable task (vs 29). Jesus of Nazareth was the *Lamb of God*, Who, by sacrificing Himself and everything He had, could take away the sin of the world and blot it out (vs 29; Isaiah 53). This shows that John was aware of Jesus' future sacrifice on the cross (compare Isaiah .53).

John pointed out Christ as *the Lamb of God* to help validate Christ's Messiahship in the eyes of the skeptical religious leaders. To the Jews this was a very significant title, pregnant with Old Testament imagery, taking the Jewish mind back to -- Genesis 22:8 when Abraham said, "God will provide a lamb" (a ram was provided as a substitute for Isaac); to the Passover lamb (Exodus 12); the lambs for the burnt offerings (Exodus 29:38-46); and the sacrificial lamb (Isaiah 53) which takes away the sin or "takes up [bears] the sin." The image could be that of disposal of sin or of bearing sin (as in Isaiah 53) of the world -- not just of Israel. The Lamb took upon Him all the sin of the world. But God's Lamb was yet to come.

What exactly was in the Baptist's mind when, looking at Jesus who was making His way toward him, he uttered those words -- "The *Lamb of God*, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) -- must probably be interpreted in the light of several references in I John, where it is said that Jesus "appeared to take away sins" (3:5), that He "will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1:9), that "He is the expiation for our sins, and . . . for the sins of the whole world" (2:2), that "His blood cleanses us from all sin" (1:7). This language is sacrificial: There was the picture of "the Suffering Servant" of which Isaiah spoke -- (" . . . as a sheep led to the slaughter, and a lamb dumb before his shearers . . . whose soul was made a guilt offering. . . . and who bore the sin of many (Isaiah 53:7, 10, 12)."

Christ came to earth first as a Suffering Servant (Isa, chapter 53). He will come again as King and Judge to rule victoriously over all the earth.

The statement that Jesus is the one Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit foretells Jesus' divine mission and characterizes His entire ministry. Jesus came to give eternal life to those who believe in Him. But no one could actually receive that life apart from receiving the life-giving Holy Spirit, imparting not only forgiveness but also eternal life. He would send the Holy Spirit upon all believers, empowering them to live and to teach the message of salvation. This outpouring of the Spirit came after Jesus had been raised from the dead and ascended into heaven (see 20:22; Acts 2). This looked ahead to Pentecost (Acts 2).

The Old Testament promised a time when God would demonstrate His purifying power among people (Isaiah 32:15; Malachi 3:2). The baptism with fire also symbolizes the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing God's judgment on those who refuse to repent. The experience would not necessarily be like that recorded in Acts 2, but the outcome would be the same. This baptism would purify and refine each believer. When Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit, the entire person would be refined by the Spirit's fire.

All true believers have been baptized by Jesus in the Holy Spirit (see Romans 8:9). As such we have been immersed in Jesus' Spirit. Now we can experience the life-giving Spirit and enjoy His presence day by day.

John declared Jesus' special position with God -- the *Son of God*. God had told John that He would reveal to him the "sent-one:-- the Spirit would descend upon the Messiah and remain upon Him. John saw this happen to Jesus and declared his belief in Jesus as God's identified Son.

This title not only comprises but surpasses those which the Baptist disclaimed for himself (vs 21-22). In the Old Testament it was the title of the messianic king. To John the evangelist it connotes the perfect relation of the divine nature.

Application

Christ helps us see our way to God and shows us how to walk along that way. But Christ has chosen to reflect His Light through His followers to an unbelieving world, perhaps because unbelievers are not able to bear the full blazing Glory of His Light firsthand.

Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah, God's servant, would be led to the slaughter like a lamb (53:7). To pay the penalty for sin, a life had to be given -- and God chose to provide the sacrifice Himself. The sins of the world were removed when Jesus died as the perfect sacrifice. This is the way our sins are forgiven (I Corinthians 5:7). The "sin of the world" means everyone's sin, the sin of each individual. Jesus paid the price of our sin by His death. All can receive forgiveness by confessing their sin to Him

and asking for His forgiveness. Confession of sins and a changed life are inseparable. Faith without deeds is dead (James 2:14-26). Those who believe must also truly turn from sin, proving by the way they live that they have really turned from their sin and turned to God.

Teacher Helps

In this lesson students will see for the first time that Jesus is called the “Lamb of God,” taking them back to Isaiah’s concept of the “Suffering Servant.” There are three sets of scripture passages which give the history and identity of John the Baptizer, what John’s mission was, and John’s testimony concerning Jesus. As you prepare for this lesson, consider the following for presenting the lesson.

1. First, after studying the scripture, decide to use either the “Set” given below or come up with one of your own. Have students participate in the “Set” which will establish in their thinking an astounding event such as is pointed out in the scripture when John the Baptist suddenly pointed Him out to the crowd and announced Jesus identity.

2. Second, read and discuss Luke 1:57, 59-60, 67, 76-80. These passages talk about who John the Baptizer was. It starts with Zechariah’s message (John’s father) to the infant John at his birth, laying out John’s mission. The concept of “Light” occurs in these passages.

3. Second, read and discuss Matthew 3:1-2 and John 1:6-7. These few verses set forth what John was doing and why.

4. Third, read and discuss, through the objective questions, John 1:8-9, 15, 29-37. In these verses John the Baptizer introduces Jesus as the “Lamb of God” and connects Him again with the Light. John’s introduction was so successful that two of his disciples left him and became disciples of Jesus.

Be sure and bring the on-going list of Jesus’ titles and attributes up to date as students contribute to Jesus’ identify and discuss these items. Draw students’ attention to Isaiah 53 for the connection to Isaiah’s “suffering servant.”

Vocabulary: Keep in mind that there may be problems with some of the words in the scripture that students are unfamiliar with, even in their own language. Do not teach these words, but be prepared to help students with them when needed. The following words and ideas may be stumbling blocks to students’ understanding:

Luke Chapter 1

vs 67 filled with the Holy Spirit, prophecy
vs 76: prophet, the Most High
vs 78: Light from heaven
vs 79: path of peace
vs 80: wilderness, Israel

Matthew Chapter 3

vs 1: the Baptist, the Judean wilderness
vs 2: God, Kingdom of Heaven

John Chapter 1

vs 7: testimony
vs 8: witness
vs 9: True Light
vs 15: existed
vs 29: Lamb of God, sin
vs 32: dove
vs 34: Son of God

As you prepare to present this lesson, keep in mind the objectives of the lesson (stated below) and attempt to achieve all of them. Let the Holy Spirit lead as you discuss these very important concepts.

Scripture: Matthew 3:1-2; Luke 1:57, 59-60, 76-80; John 1:29-37

Set

Imagine that you are in a crowd listening to a public official speaking. In the process of speaking, that person said he had heard God speak to him and told him to look for a certain man for a

special job; then God told the speaker how he would recognize this person. “What would you think about this speaker at this point?” (responses) Then the speaker suddenly said “there he is – that’s the man!” What kind of response would that draw from the crowd? From you? What would you think, first, about the speaker? Then about the man being pointed out?

Then say, “We’re going to read about a similar happening.”

Objectives: Students will

1. Learn the identify and history of John the Baptizer.
2. Observe that God used John the Baptist as the unique prophet to introduce Jesus to others who would follow Jesus.
3. Observe that God used John the Baptist as the unique prophet to introduce Jesus to us.
4. Connect John’s message with his introduction of Jesus.
5. Discover how John introduces Jesus.
6. Identify Jesus’ special position with God.
7. Learn about Jesus through the descriptive names given by John.
8. Discuss the meaning of Jesus as the True Light.
9. Discuss the meaning of Jesus as the Lamb of God.
10. Describe John’s spiritual relationship to Jesus.
11. Discuss how John knew who Jesus was.
12. Connect John’s introduction with Isaiah’s prophecy of the Suffering Servant.

Objective Questions

History and identity of John the Baptizer --

Luke 1:57, 59-60, 76-79

Verses 57, 59-60

1. Who are the characters here?
2. What is happening?

Verses 67, 76-79

3. Who are the characters in these verses?
4. Who is Zechariah?
5. What is he doing?
6. Who is he talking to?
7. What is Zechariah saying to his son? (vs 76, 77, 78-79)
8. What does this message remind you of? (Isaiah 9:6)
9. What or who is “the Light” mentioned in verse 78? (You may need to remind students of Isaiah 9:2)
10. What is the purpose of this Light? (verse 79)
11. Who is “the Lord” in verse 76?

Luke 1:80

12. Describe who John is and what his purpose was in being born.

John’s mission --

Matthew 3:1-2, John 1:6-7

13. Who are the characters in these verses?
14. What was John doing?
15. What was John’s purpose in preaching? (vs 2, 7)
16. What was John’s special relationship to Jesus?
17. What kind of people was John talking to?
18. What does the word “True” relative to the “Light” imply here?
19. How could the Light help the people John was talking to? (You may need to refer students back to Luke 1:78-79 where Zechariah is talking about the Light.)

20. How can the True Light help you?

John 1:8-9, 15

21. Who are the characters in these verses?

22. Who is this un-named person Jesus was pointing out?

23. What did John mean when he said “existed long before I did?”

24. What do you know about this person John was talking about, thus far?

John’s Testimony Concerning Jesus --

John 1:29-37

25. Who are the characters in these verses?

26. What did John call Jesus?

27. Why did he call Jesus the “Lamb of God?”

28. How does this title “Lamb of God” remind you of Isaiah?

29. Why did John say that Jesus was “greater than I am.”

Verses 32-34

30. What did John now call Jesus?

31. How did John know this?

Verses 35-37

32. Who are the characters here?

33. What happened?

Summarizing Questions

1. What do we know about Jesus up to this point, from what we have read and talked about?
(Add these things to the list you have been keeping.)
2. What does John say about Jesus?
3. How does what John the Baptizer have to say about Jesus remind you of the Suffering Servant that Isaiah talked about (53:7)?
4. What was the result of John’s testimony?

Subjective Questions

1. What does this passage say about Jesus?
2. What does it mean that Jesus is the Lamb of God?
3. What is the result for Jesus that He is the Lamb of God?
5. What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of God?
6. What does it mean *to you* that Jesus is the Lamb of God and the Son of God?
7. What does this passage say about God?

Lesson 4
Heaven's Introduction of Jesus
The Beloved Son of God

PRINCIPLE THOUGHT

God the Father (Himself) introduces Jesus to us as His “beloved Son.” Jesus Christ’s divinity is confirmed, as is His Sonship and Glory. However, Jesus’ identity and introduction is not to be taken for granted. The Devil will not allow Jesus to assume anything. Jesus struggles with His identity and mission and is tempted even as we are; but He is victorious, thus confirming once more His identity as the Messiah, the Son of God.. God makes it clear that Jesus is His final and definitive revelation exhorting all who hear – “listen to Him.”

Lesson Summary

These three events fit together. Jesus’ identity and destiny is communicated in our behalf. Each event builds upon the other pointing to the role, identity, purpose, for each of us. God wants to tell each of us who we are and our purpose in His will.

Jesus’ Baptism

Jesus lived in obscurity until the event of His baptism. Luke emphasizes Jesus’ humble beginnings: He was born to parents of low socio-economic status, a birth unannounced except to shepherds and foreigners. When Jesus, at age 12, visited the Temple, He seemed to understand His mission (2:49). We know nothing of Jesus until eighteen years later when at His baptism, He began carrying it out. This baptism recorded here was the first public declaration of Jesus’ ministry. Instead of going to Jerusalem and identifying with the established religious leaders, Jesus went to a river and identified Himself with those who were repenting of sin., And as Jesus prayed, God spoke and confirmed His decision to act.

The Gospel writers are not as interested in the actual baptism of Jesus as they are in the events which accompany it -- the opening of heaven, the descent of the Spirit as a dove in bodily form resting on Jesus (Luke 3:21-22; John 1:32-34), and the Voice from God -- all point to the solemnity of the occasion; God was breaking into human history through Jesus the Christ and introduced Jesus to us.

The descent of the Spirit indicates that Jesus is being anointed for His ministry (compare Acts 10:37-38). The words of the heavenly Voice indicate that Jesus is God’s Son and Servant; they contain allusions to Psalm 2:7; Isaiah 42:1; and Genesis 22:2,. The New Testament passages that tell about the baptism of Jesus are not teaching that Jesus was adopted as God’s Son, for the Gospel writers show that they considered Jesus to be God’s Son from the beginning (Matthew 1:16; Mark 1:1; Luke 1:35; John 1:14). Jesus did not become the Son or the Messiah at this baptism. Jesus already had His divinity from eternity past. The opened heavens, the dove, and the Voice revealed to John the Baptist (and to readers of this story) that Jesus was God’s Son, come to earth as the promised Messiah to fulfill prophecy and bring salvation to all who believe.

This event could be called “the commissioning of Christ.”

Why Did Jesus come to be baptized?

It was because it would be the proper way for Him to obey God in every aspect of life. It wasn’t because He needed to admit sin – He was sinless (John 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 3:5). Jesus was baptized to

- (1) Confess sin on behalf of the nation;
- (2) Accomplish God’s mission and advance God’s work in the world;

- (3) Inaugurate His public ministry to bring the message of salvation to all people;
- (4) Show support for John's ministry;
- (5) Identify with the penitent people of God, thus with humanness and sin;
- (6) Give us an example to follow.

Jesus, the perfect man, accepted baptism in obedient service to the Father, and God showed His approval.

The Spirit Like a Dove . . .

God showed His approval -- “. . . after His baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water (Matthew 3:16)” – Mark (1:10) has “out of the water,” “and,” adds Luke (3:21), “. . . as He was praying;” the heavens were opened – Mark says, “He [Jesus] saw the heavens, split open.” The “open heaven” is referred to in prophetic visions (Ezekiel 1:1; Revelation 4:1 19:11) and times of heavenly unveilings (Acts 7:56); and John the Baptist saw the Spirit of God descending, as he tells us himself (John 1:32-34).

This emphasized the way the Holy Spirit related to Jesus. The descending Spirit portrayed a gentle, peaceful, but active presence coming to anoint Jesus. It was not that Jesus needed to be filled with the Spirit (as if there were any lack in Him) because He had the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35) since his conception. Rather, this was Jesus' royal anointing (see Isaiah 11:2; 42:1).

The description of the “Holy Spirit” as a “dove” primarily indicates that the Spirit of God's descent was like the descent of a dove (Matthew, Mark, and John); the other meaning (and this is the one made explicit in Luke 3:22) is that the Spirit had the form of a dove; in other words, Luke pictures the Spirit in the visible form of a dove. All four Gospel writers give us one more piece of information -- that the “dove” actually touched down on Jesus -- John used the word “rested,” Matthew used the word “settled,” Mark and Luke “on Him.” Only John the Baptist testifies that he witnessed that the “dove ‘rested’ on Jesus.” “John said, I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from Heaven and resting upon Him.” And John adds that this last particular was expressly given him as part of the sign by which he was to recognize and identify Jesus as the Son of God: “I didn't know He was the One, but when God sent me to baptize with water, He told me, ‘When you see the Holy Spirit descending and resting upon someone, He is the One you are looking for. He is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit’;” John further said, “I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that He is the Son of God” (John 1:32-34). This perfectly compares with the predicted descent of the Spirit upon Messiah (Isaiah 11:2): “And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him.” We cannot doubt that it was this permanent and perfect resting of the Holy Spirit upon the Son of God that was here visibly manifested.

The Spirit of God, was observed only by Jesus, not by the bystanders other than by John the Baptizer. Through the impartation of the Spirit, God turns the repentance-baptism into an ordination of Jesus for His ministry, for the Messiah must be “anointed” before He enters on His work. (ITB (vol 7) p. 268)

The Holy Spirit's appearance in the form of a dove and resting on Jesus showed that

- (1) The reality of the Spirit equipped Jesus for His ministry.
- (2) The Spirit's coming upon Jesus proved to John the Baptist that Jesus was the Messiah (1:33).
- (3) God's plan for salvation was centered in Jesus.
- (4) The Spirit's descending was a sign that Jesus was the Messiah;
- (5) The age of the Spirit predicted by the prophets was formally beginning (Isaiah 61:1);
- (6) God was at work in the world.

Therefore, the arrival of the Messiah, marked by the descending of the Spirit, in this case, in the form of a dove, indicated that this was Jesus' royal anointing (see Isaiah 11:2; 42:1).

The “Voice” . . .

God's announcement (Matthew 3:17) at Jesus' baptism was the first of three times when God spoke from heaven regarding His Son (compare 17:5; John 12:28). There were two titles given in the baptism accounts: (1) "Son" (compare Exodus 4:22, where God spoke of the nation of Israel as His son) and (2) "beloved" (compare Genesis 22:2, where Abraham called his only son, Isaac, "beloved"). Not only did God apply these two titles to Jesus, but He continued by saying ". . . in Whom I am well pleased."

Jesus was both the Messiah and the representative of the covenant people before God. That representation would become the basis for the mediating role He would take in God's ongoing work of redemption.

In Matthew 3:16-17, all three Persons of the Trinity are present and active. The doctrine of the Trinity, which was developed much later in church history, teaches that God is three persons and yet one in essence. At the baptism God the Son is baptized; God the Holy Spirit descends on Jesus; and God the Father speaks.

"My . . . Son, . . . "

The Voice of God speaks in words of Scripture: "This is My . . . Son" (Matthew 3:17; Mark ; Luke) is a quotation from Psalm 2:7. While all believers would eventually be called "sons of God" (or "children of God"), Jesus Christ has a different, unique relationship with God; He is the one unique Son of God. "This is . . ." (Mark 1:11) implies that God is speaking to bystanders; "You are . . ." (Matthew 3:17) implies that God is speaking directly to Jesus. The "Voice" from heaven is not recorded in the Book of John.

". . . Beloved . . . "

"The beloved" is a messianic title (Ephesians 1:6) and may be better translated as "the Chosen One." (ITB, Vol 7, p. 268) "Beloved" is defined as "well loved" and "much loved." This declaration from the Father to the Son echoes the prophetic statement made by God through Isaiah: "Look at my servant, whom I strengthen. He is my chosen one, and I am pleased with Him. I have put my Spirit upon Him. He will reveal justice to the nations." (Isaiah 42:1.)

". . . fully pleased. . . "

The phrase, "I am fully pleased with Him," expresses the Father's constant, great delight, pleasure, and satisfaction in His Son. This echoes two Old Testament passages. First, Psalms 2:7 is a messianic Psalm that describes the coronation of Christ, the eternal King. The rule of Christ described in the Psalms will begin after His crucifixion and resurrection and will be fulfilled when He comes to set up His Kingdom on earth; Second, Isaiah chapter 53 describes the Servant-Messiah Who would suffer and die as He served God and fulfilled His mission of atoning for sin on behalf of humanity and would ultimately be the King Who would reign forever.

Jesus is seen at His baptism as the perfect example of obedience. At this moment Jesus becomes aware of His life's mission: the heavens open, the Holy Spirit descends upon Him, and the voice of God declares: "Thou art my Beloved Son; with Thee I am well pleased." These demonstrations by God mean that He is the One Whom God has specially chosen for some divine mission. It was this endowment with the Spirit which led Jesus into the wilderness where He was put to the test by Satan and equipped for His public ministry in Galilee (Luke 4:14-15, 18, 5:17).

The Temptation

The story of Jesus' temptation briefly recounted by Mark (1:12-13) and more fully by Matthew (4:1-11) is best understood as an account of the ordeal of the Messiah, in which He was put to the test. The devil attempted to ascertain Jesus' true nature, whether Jesus' human side could take over His life. Jesus' victory over the tempter was decisive, at this time and for all time!

Clearly the temptation is linked with the revelation from His Baptism – that Jesus is the "*Son of God*;" the phrase calls attention to Jesus' unique relation to God and His superhuman powers. At that time, Jesus knew with an instant and overwhelming certainty that His God-ordained ministry had begun. The same Holy Spirit, who had sent Jesus to be baptized, led Him out into the wilderness to be tempted

there by the Devil. Now He must determine exactly what God's will for Him involved. How should He act as Son? It would seem appropriate that Jesus should have His vocation tested and that His ministry should begin with a struggle between God's Kingdom and Satan's, in which both God and His Son are vindicated. Jesus took the offensive against the enemy, Satan. All His actions were to be focused on fulfilling His Father's mission, even if it meant suffering and death (which, of course, it did). If Jesus had not been God's Son, there would have been no reason for this event.

God's purpose in the temptation was to

-- demonstrate Jesus' sinlessness (compare II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15) through Jesus' obedience to the Father's will.

-- Accomplish Jesus' mission of bringing salvation to the world, Jesus would take the path of submission to God.

The Devil phrased his temptation (recorded in (Matthew 4:3) by saying, "**If** you are the Son of God" (could be translated "**Since** you are the Son of God . . ." *iLumina*), not because he disbelieved Jesus' divine Sonship but because he wanted Jesus to act in accordance with his divine prerogatives and thereby fail to pass the test as a man. Both Jesus and Satan knew the truth of Jesus' identity.

Satan tempted Jesus with His own power. To truly accomplish His mission, Jesus had to be completely humbled. Making bread for Himself would have shown that He had not quite set aside all His power, had not humbled Himself, and had not identified completely with the human race. But Jesus refused, showing that He would use His powers only in submission to God's plan.

The three temptations of the devil -- focusing on three crucial areas, (1) physical needs and desires, (2) possessions and power, and (3) pride -- occurred when Jesus was at His most physically weakened state, showing us that Jesus was human. But the devil tempted Jesus, also, where He was strong -- trying to force Jesus to use His powers as the Son of God. This temptation by Satan gave Jesus the opportunity to reaffirm God's plan for His ministry. The test of Satan proved Jesus' true identity as the Son of God.

Following the third temptation, Jesus banished Satan with the words, "Get out of here!" Satan had to do as Jesus commanded. So the Devil went away.

As a result, Jesus enjoyed God's provision (?? 4:10-11). Angels were then sent direct from God (Luke 9:36), whom Jesus had so gloriously honored! That the angels' coming and caring for Jesus in no way lessens the intensity of the temptations that Jesus faced. They may have brought Him food, but they also attended to His spiritual needs.

The Temptation showed that --

1. Jesus really is the Son of God, able to overcome the devil and his temptations.
2. The bond between Father and Son is confirmed (the devil could not sever it), and the Son is ready for His appointed mission.
3. Jesus was human, and it gave Him the opportunity to reaffirm God's plan for His ministry.
4. Jesus succeeded in perfect obedience during His temptation. He could not have shown true obedience if He had not had an opportunity to disobey. Again, God was "fully pleased" (Matthew 3:17) with Jesus' righteousness (3:15).
5. Jesus' temptation was an important demonstration of His sinlessness. He would face temptation and not give in.

The Transfiguration

That Jesus is more than an ordinary prophet will be dramatically and visually substantiated in the Transfiguration (Luke 9:2-9).

Every line of this recorded event portrays God's visitation. The central and overpowering truth is the truth of God in Christ. The Transfiguration is not merely the divine seal on the ministry of Jesus: it records the fact that God has broken into our world through Him. This experience was God's signature on the choice and commitment that Christ had made.

As Jesus prayed (Luke 9:29), the appearance of His face changed and His divine majesty shone gloriously through His human nature. Matthew (17:2) says that His face was as the sun, and Mark (9:3) says that His clothing became dazzling white as no bleach could make them white. (The word “*shone*” implies the divine light.) White garments are the high priestly robes of the Messiah. The light was not something that shone upon Him from without, but shone out of Him from within. He was all irradiated and was in one blaze of celestial glory. This revealed Jesus’ true glory and purity. He appeared glorious because He was divine. At this time, He was transformed into the glorious radiance that He will have in heaven. Isaiah tells us that it was a startling contrast to that which people saw – a person who was “. . . beaten and bloodied, so disfigured one would scarcely know he was a person” (Isaiah 52:14).

According to Luke, the display of dazzling glory awakened the three disciples (9:32). When awakened, Peter saw three men – Moses, Elijah, and Jesus – and mistakenly treated the three as equals when he offered to build three shelters; Peter missed Jesus’ true identity as God Himself. He called Jesus “*Master*” (meaning “Teacher”), when this glorious display should have shown him that Jesus was far more just Teacher. Suddenly a cloud enveloped them and God spoke out of the cloud. This was the second of three times that God spoke from heaven about His Son (Matthew 17:5; compare 3:17 and John 12:28).

Peter said “We ourselves heard the voice when we were there with him on the holy mountain” (II Peter 1:18). The heavenly voice asserted Jesus’ preeminence above all others.

The “*cloud*” (Matthew calls it a “*bright cloud*” [17:5]), from which the Voice of God spoke, was actually the glory of God – the same glory that had guided Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 13:21), had appeared to the people in the wilderness, had appeared to Moses, and had filled the Temple.

God spoke of Jesus exclusively and declared Him to be His only Son and the promised Messiah (“*My Chosen One*,” Luke 9:35: compare the Baptism account 3:17) Who possessed divine authority. God gave divine approval of His Son, separating Him from Moses and Elijah by saying that Jesus was the Son, the Chosen One and that the disciples must “*listen to Him*” (Luke 9:35) which placed the stamp of divine truth upon the teachings Jesus had given, placing authority to Jesus’ words -- teachings about the necessity of Jesus’ death and about the gaining of Life through the renunciation of life. God clearly identified Jesus as His Son before saying that Peter and the others were to listen to Jesus and not to their own ideas and desires. The Father was identifying Jesus as His beloved Son. The heavenly voice asserted Jesus’ preeminence above all others.

The glory disappeared, the cloud went away, the voice finished speaking, Moses and Elijah left, and Jesus, who was now there alone with His disciples, looked once again like an ordinary man. Jesus would eventually return to glory, but He would first follow the path of suffering and seeming defeat on this earth. Only then could He fully accomplish the plan of salvation.

This Transfiguration was designed, first, to reveal to Peter, James, and John the resplendent preeminence of the Son. They did indeed receive a glimpse of the Kingdom of God. This was God’s affirmation of everything Jesus had done and was about to do. The Transfiguration clearly revealed not only that they were correct in believing Jesus to be the Messiah (Matthew 16:16), but that their commitment was well placed and their eternity was secure. Jesus was truly the Messiah, the Divine Son of God. This event confirmed Jesus Christ’s divinity and a commission for the disciples. This experience made it possible for the apostles to bear witness for our benefit of Jesus true glory and the special revelation of His divinity.

Secondly, the Transfiguration focused on Who Jesus is. The scene is similar to Jesus’ Baptism (3:21-22), for Jesus is again called *God’s chosen Son*, the purpose of which is to confirm Jesus’ Sonship and glory. Jesus is more than just a great leader, a good example, a good influence, or a great prophet. He is the Son of God and the Messiah.

Application

1. Peter, James, and John experienced a wonderful moment on the mountain, and they didn’t

want to leave. Sometimes we too have such an inspiring experience that we want to stay where we are – away from the reality and problems of our daily life; knowing that struggles await us in the “real world” encourages us to linger on the “mountaintop.” Yet staying there prohibits our ministering to others. Instead of becoming spiritual giants, we would soon become dwarfed by our self-centeredness. If the disciples had stayed there we might not have had their testimony of the event. We need times of retreat and renewal, but only so we can return to minister to the world. Our faith must make sense off the “mountain” as well as on it.

2. As God’s Son, Jesus has God’s power and authority; thus, His words should be our final authority. If a person’s teaching is true, it will agree with Jesus’ teachings. Test everything you hear against Jesus’ words, and you will not be led astray. Don’t be hasty to seek advice and guidance from merely human sources and thereby neglect Christ’s message. The ability to follow Jesus’ commands comes from confidence about Who He is. If we believe He is God’s Son, then we surely will want to do what He says.

Teacher Helps

In this lesson, God Himself, at Jesus’ baptism and at the transfiguration in the presence of first, John the Baptist, and then His three disciples, confirms the identify of Jesus by calling Him “My Beloved Son.” Between these two events is the temptation event: the transfiguration could not have taken place without the temptation of Jesus, an event during which the devil tries to test Jesus’ identity; but Jesus wins the struggle and receives the confirmation of His identity; He is Jesus, the Son of God. The transfiguration confirms for Jesus Himself and for the three disciples Jesus’ identity and His mission. Three scripture passages – Matthew 3:13-17, 4:1-11, and Luke 9:28-36 tell how God introduces Jesus. Present this lesson using the following suggestions and in that sequence.

1. First, after studying the scripture, decide to use either the suggested “Set,” given below, or come up with one of your own. Have students participate in the “Set” which will establish in their thinking the astounding idea of God speaking!

2. Second, read and discuss Matthew 3:13-17. It is in this passage, at Jesus’ baptism that we heard God’s voice declaring Jesus as “My Beloved Son.” God further said that He was “fully please with Him [Jesus].” It is here also that Jesus becomes the model for obedience in baptism.

3. Third, read and discuss Matthew 4:1-11. It might be difficult at first to understand how Jesus’ temptation introduces Jesus as the Son of God, but with some thought students should be able to think this through. First, if He weren’t the Son of God, why would He be in this struggle in the first place. Secondly, the Devil points out that Jesus is the Son of God. Third, Jesus is victorious and is ministered to by angels.

4. Last, read and discuss Luke 9:28-36. What a glorious experience the transfiguration must have been for Peter, James, and John as they saw Jesus’ appearance totally changed and Moses and Elijah standing with Jesus and talking to Him. Later, Peter is to testify of this experience (II Peter 1:16-18). After Peter’s impulsive offer to build three shrines, Peter may have felt rebuffed and come to Peter as quite a shock to hear God saying “Listen to Him [Jesus]!” It was undoubtedly an unforgettable experience for the disciples (as for us had we been there). Try to get students to visualize this experience.

Be sure and bring the on-going list up to date as students contribute to Jesus’ identify and discuss these items. Draw students’ attention to Isaiah 53 for the connection to Isaiah’s “suffering servant.”

Vocabulary: Keep in mind that it is important that students comprehend the following vocabulary and English phrases. Do not teach these words, but be prepared to help students with them when needed. The following words and ideas may be stumbling blocks to students’ understanding:

Matthew Chapter 3
vs 13: Galilee, Jordan River, baptize,

(Matthew 4 continued)
vs 9: kneel down, worship,

vs 16: Spirit of God, descending, dove, settling
vs 17: My beloved Son, fully pleased,
Matthew Chapter 4
vs 1: wilderness, Holy Spirit, tempted, Devil,
vs 4: Word of God,
vs 5: Jerusalem, Temple,
vs 8: peak,
vs 10: Scriptures, worship,

Luke Chapter 9
vs 29: dazzling white,
vs 30: Moses, Elijah,
vs 31: glorious
vs 32: drowsy
vs 33: blurted out, shrines,
vs 34: terror gripped.

As you prepare to present this lesson, keep in mind the objectives of the lesson (stated below) and attempt to achieve all of them.

Scripture: Matthew 3:13-17, 4:1-11; Luke 9:28-36

Set

Ask questions such as these: “Have you ever heard God speak, out loud.” “And if you were to hear God speak, what would you think about this possibility?” “What do you think He would be saying to you.” “What would you think about it?” “What would be the response if you tried to tell someone about this experience?”

Then say “Let’s visit with someone who heard God speak.”

Objectives: Students will

1. Observe that God introduced and confirmed Jesus as His Son.
2. Observe that God was “fully pleased” with Jesus.
4. Discuss the special revelation of Jesus’ divinity.
5. Discuss the unique relationship that Jesus has with God the Father. (“My beloved Son”)
6. Learn that Jesus became the model of obedience in baptism for each of us.
7. Compare the introduction of Jesus by God at baptism with that by John the Baptist.
8. Discuss how the event of the temptation itself confirmed Jesus’ identity as the Son of God.
9. Observe that Satan identified Jesus as the Son of God.
10. Discuss Jesus’ struggle with His identity during His temptation.
11. Observe that Jesus’ overcoming Satan’s temptations confirms Him as the Son of God.
12. Learn that Jesus during the temptation was obedient to God’s purpose for His life.
13. Discuss how the Transfiguration gives them a glimpse of Jesus’ true glory.
14. Learn that the presence of Moses and Elijah confirmed Jesus’ identity in fulfilling God’s law and the words of God’s prophets.
15. Observe and discuss the actions of the three disciples as God confirms Jesus’ identity to them.
16. Discuss God’s divine affirmation of everything Jesus had done and was about to do.
17. Describe how God gave authority to Jesus’ words.

Objective Questions

God Speaks at Jesus’ baptism --

Matthew 3:13-17

Verses 13-15

1. Who are the characters in these verses?
2. Where are they?
3. Why did Jesus go there?
4. What was the problem?
5. What was Jesus’ reply?
6. What do you suppose Jesus meant by this?

7. What did John do?
8. What message does this give you?

Verses 16-17

9. What happened in these verses?
10. Who was speaking in verse 17?
11. What does this tell us about Jesus?

Jesus' Temptation --

Matthew 4:1-11

Verses 1-4

12. Who are the characters here?
13. What condition was Jesus in? Why?
14. Who does the Devil think Jesus is? How do you know this?
15. Why did the Devil tempt Jesus with bread?
16. What was Jesus' answer?
17. What does this tell us about Jesus?

Verses 5-7

18. What is the Devil tempting Jesus with in these verses?
19. What was Jesus' response?
20. What does this tell us about Jesus?

Verses 8-11

21. What was the Devil tempting Jesus with in these verses?
22. What was the Devil's promise?
23. What was Jesus' response?
24. What happened after Jesus answered the Devil?
25. What does this tell us about Jesus?
26. What do you think about Jesus at this point?

God Speaks at Jesus' Transfiguration --

Luke 9:26-36

Verses 28-31

27. Who are the characters in these verses?
28. Where are they?
29. What happened to Jesus?
30. Why do you think Jesus' appearance was changed?
31. What does this tell us about Jesus?
32. Who are the two men who appeared in verse 30?
33. Where did they come from?
34. What is the significance of their appearance?
35. What were they talking about with Jesus?
36. Who does this remind you of Isaiah? About what John the Baptist said about Jesus?
37. Why do you think this was going to happen to Jesus?

Verses 32-36

38. Who are the characters here?
39. What happened in verse 35?
40. Who was the voice?
41. What do you learn about Jesus from verses 28-36?

Summarizing Questions

1. What have you learned about Jesus thus far? (Compare responses with the on-going list.)

2. What does each of these things say about Jesus? (discuss each separately)
3. How does Jesus' experience in temptation show Him as the Son of God?

Subjective Questions

1. What does this passage say about Jesus?
2. How can the experience of Jesus in temptation help you with temptation?
3. What does it mean that Jesus is "My beloved Son?"
4. What does it mean that Jesus is "My Chosen One?"
5. What does it mean *to you personally* that Jesus is "My beloved Son," "My Chosen One?"
6. How can this knowledge of Jesus change your life?
7. What does this passage say about God?
8. How does God feel about Jesus?
9. How do you feel about Jesus?

Lesson 5
The Holy Spirit's Introduction
The Resurrected Lord

PRINCIPLE THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit, through the disciples (primarily the Apostle Peter) proclaimed the message of Christ to unbelievers, being faithful to the truth. Peter proclaimed Jesus as Lord and Messiah: He had been crucified by the Jews, raised from the dead, and exalted to the throne of God. The results were dramatic: the Holy Spirit brought about conviction so that 3,000 were saved. The Spirit is the power for a new life.

Lesson Summary

The Holy Spirit of God introduced Jesus to the people of different languages and cultures through the testimony of the disciples. God transcended language and understanding to reaffirm the Son of God our Savior and Lord.

The Holy Spirit introduced Jesus as God's "Chosen One (Luke 9:35). Jesus

1. Was accredited by God through His wonders, miracles, and signs during His time on earth;
2. Became the Suffering Servant;
3. Was raised from the dead;
4. Ascended into Heaven and sits on the right hand of God, the Father;
5. Is Lord and Messiah.

At the beginning of the book of Acts, Jesus' followers who had earlier appeared confused and fearful, by the second chapter of Acts are well on their way to transforming the Roman world with the Gospel. What accounts for this dramatic change? Verse 8 of chapter 1 (also Luke 24:49; John 14:17-21, 23-25) provide the answer: Jesus said ". . . you shall receive power and will tell people about Me everywhere . . ."

1. The promised "power" means ability or capacity, and is not the kind of power that political authority uses to force.
2. The believers would "be witnesses," not just "do witnessing."
3. The power came from without, not from within. The believers were to look for supernatural ability from the Spirit to make them effective in Gospel presentation.
4. The believers were to be witnesses to Christ, the risen Lord, not to themselves (Matthew 28:18-20).

This "filling of the Spirit," described in the early verses of Acts chapter 2 -- mentioned again in 4:8, 9:17, 13:9 -- and is usually connected with the bold, effective proclamation of the Gospel, the ability to be a witness (1:8), is what Jesus had promised (1:8 and in John 14:17-221, 23-25) and what emboldened Peter to speak out. The other disciples also preached boldly (vs 4, 14), but only Peter's words are recorded. Here we see astoundingly different men (Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:55-62; John 18:15, 25-27, 20:18), especially Peter in his denial of Jesus after He was arrested, contrasted with their expression of intense fear following Jesus' crucifixion.

As day broke on the morning of Jesus' resurrection, His followers were in hiding and terribly afraid of the Jewish religious authorities (John 20:19). Peter was crushed beyond bearing by the knowledge that he had denied Christ.

The filling of the Holy Spirit enabled the person so endowed to speak or preach for God. Thus, the filling of the Spirit is directly related to the disciples who began to speak in other languages. They spoke in authentic languages and probably all uttered the same praise of God's wonderful works (2:11)."

God made His presence known to this group of believers in a spectacular way – violent wind, what appeared to be fire, and His Holy Spirit.

This unusual event was predicted by the Old Testament prophets, John the Baptist, and Jesus (Acts 1:5). What looked like fire appeared and settled on the believers (2:3). With the coming of the Holy Spirit came also enablement to communicate God's message supernaturally (2:4). The disciples were all filled with the Spirit for the specific function of proclaiming the Gospel (2:11). They were filled with the Spirit, baptized into the body of Christ, and indwelt by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13; compare Ezekiel 36:27 and John 14:17). All communications would come from Christ through the Spirit to the believers (I Corinthians 12:3c, ". . . no one is able to say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit."). The Spirit that had remained within Christ was now the Spirit that flowed from Christ to His disciples.

Such an event could not help but attract attention; a crowd quickly gathered. The gathering of the nations was a perfect platform for launching the worldwide mission of the church. This event told the Jerusalem church that God intended the Gospel for all the nations in their own languages.

Thus, Peter's speech (2:14ff) was given to an international audience, and it resulted in a worldwide harvest of new believers – the first converts to Christianity.

But more than miraculous speaking in other languages drew people's attention; there was an obvious change in the demeanor of the disciples as they boldly spoke without fear.

The speaking of other languages was directly linked to the outpouring of the Spirit (2:16-17); the pouring forth of the Spirit was directly linked to the exaltation of Jesus to the right hand of God. This sign was not simply a miracle; it was a sign pointing to the power and call of the risen and reigning Lord. It was obvious that God was at work!

The Holy Spirit worked through Peter and presented three proofs that Jesus was the Messiah: (1) His miracles (2:22-23); (2) His death and resurrection (2:24-32; compare Psalm 16:8-11); and (3) His exaltation (2:33-35; compare Psalm 110:1). Christ's resurrection and exaltation were presented as fulfillments of God's promise to David.

The Holy Spirit's Introduction of Jesus Through Peter

God accredited Jesus through His wonders, miracles, and signs during His time on earth.

Peter's main theme was the proclamation of Jesus as Lord and Messiah through an account of His ministry, death, and triumph. Jesus' life had its significance in His "miracles, wonders, and signs," devices by which God "accredited" Him – was "pleased with Him" (Matthew 3:17).

God Himself was calling the people to Himself through the great signs, miracles, and wonders. The only acceptable response to God was to believe in His Son.

Jesus became the Suffering Servant (vs 23).

With little forewarning Peter suddenly accused his Jewish audience of an awful participation in Jesus' death -- although Jesus was approved by God, the people nailed Him to the cross, an event that God had prearranged (2:23).

Everything that happened to Jesus was under God's control. Peter's purpose was to impress upon the people that what had happened was part of God's plan for man. Peter not only wanted to prove that Jesus was the Messiah, but he wanted the people to realize their own need for a change of heart, both

Lord and Christ – Jesus’ most significant titles.

Jesus was raised from the dead (vs 24).

Central to the message is the fact that “God raised Him from the dead.” The murdered Messiah had not stayed dead. God raised Him back to life again, and many people could testify to having seen the risen Christ. Jesus’ resurrection was the ultimate sign that what He said about Himself was true. Peter phrased it appropriately: death could not keep Him in its grip (2:24). Without the Resurrection, we would have no reason to believe in Jesus (I Corinthians 15:14).

Jesus ascended into Heaven and sits on the right hand of God, the Father (vs 33).

There was another major point to be made: this crucified One, the resurrected One, is now the exalted One, Who occupies the throne of highest honor in heaven, at God’s right hand (see 5:30-31; Ephesians 1:20; Colossians 3:1; Hebrews 1:3, 8:1, 10:12, 12:2; I Peter 3:22). Not only is Christ the predicted One in the Psalms, not only had He been raised from the grave, but He now sits in the most authoritative, sovereign position in the universe. That is why Jesus had the authority to pour out the promised gift of the Holy Spirit on His followers with results that the audience could see and hear. His giving of the Holy Spirit to them was a full open indication of the claim that He was the exalted Messiah.

Jesus Is Lord and Messiah (vs 36).

The resurrection is more than a victory over death. It points to one conclusion: God has made the crucified Jesus both Lord and Messiah. His Messiahship acclaimed at His baptism (Matthew 3:17), was confirmed by His resurrection; by it He was “. . . shown to be the Son of God when God powerfully raised Him from the dead by means of the Holy Spirit . . .” (Romans 1:4). He has been exalted not only as Messiah and Son of God, but as Lord.

The term *Lord* means that Jesus has absolute authority, deity, and sovereignty. “Lord” not only is bearer of a courtesy title but is bearer of “the Name which is above every name” (Philippians 2:9).

“*Messiah*” is the Hebrew term that stands behind the Greek word *Christ* and means the anointed Servant of the Lord who would come to deliver His people from tyranny and sin.

Peter concluded his message with a solid review of his main point: So let it be clearly known by everyone in Israel that Jesus was both Lord and Messiah. In the prophesied plan of God, this Jesus of Nazareth had been crucified by the Jews, raised from the dead, and exalted to the throne of God.

The Result?

The people were convicted deeply and asked Peter what they should do. He wanted his listeners to call upon the name of the Lord (2:21). He said

1. Turn from your sins – “repent.” This means a change of purpose, direction, and values.
2. Turn to God.
3. Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins.
4. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Application

The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is recounted. Its essence is to show that the man Jesus was the promised Messiah (2:36). The Holy Spirit introduced Jesus and enabled the disciples to proclaim the message of Christ to unbelievers, being faithful to the truth. That’s really all that Peter did at Pentecost (vs 14-36), but his speech produced dramatic results: the small band of Christ’s followers added 3,000 believers that day (vs 41).

The apostles’ teaching was central to the content of what was to be proclaimed. The apostles, the eyewitnesses of all Jesus had done, would be the ones whom the Holy Spirit would remind of the crucial truths by which the church would be directed for centuries to come.

Teacher Helps

This lesson, which is taken entirely from the second chapter of Acts, records the phenomenal experience of the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples. Jesus had promised that this would take place, and the disciples were awaiting this event. The chapter is divided into two parts – the first part relates the coming of the Holy Spirit; the second part relates what happened as a result. It is the Holy Spirit’s introduction of Jesus -- the Holy Spirit speaking through Peter, the disciple who confessed to Jesus, “You are the Messiah sent by God!” This message and the Holy Spirit’s conviction brought about the beginning of the Church. The scripture is broken into three parts – verses 1-4, verses 5-15, and verses 22-42. The former two sets of verses provide the backdrop and explanation of Peter’s sermon which comes third. Present the lesson using the following suggestions and in that sequence.

1. First, after studying the scripture, decide to use either the “Set” given below or come up with one of your own which will establish the same thought. Have students participate in the “Set” which will establish in their thinking the idea of someone suddenly being able to speak another language without ever being exposed to the language or studying it.

2. Second, read and discuss verses 1 to 4. These verses illustrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. The twelve disciples were in the building and were led by the Holy Spirit to begin speaking to the crowds of people in the streets. The odd thing about this “speaking” was that it was in several languages which the disciples could neither speak nor understand. The point is that the Holy Spirit enables us to do things which are completely foreign to our thinking – a good point to express to students.

3. Third, read and discuss verses 5 to 15. These verses establish that it is Peter who is speaking and Jews who are listening. The listeners question how these disciples could be speaking other languages. Being “from Galilee” would imply that the disciples are uneducated, unsophisticated, backwoods men. But, whatever the listeners thought, what the Holy Spirit did got their attention. And Peter uses that to advantage.

4. Last, read and discuss verses 22 to 24 and 33 to 42. It is in these verses that the Holy Spirit introduces Jesus in the suffering servant role and the victorious resurrection from the dead. Students should be encouraged to examine Isaiah 53 to see how these verses compare to both Isaiah’s concept of the suffering servant and the king and led to realize that they indeed are the same person. There is evidence of changed lives in this passage (verses 41-42), not to mention Peter’s changed life (for example, his denial of Jesus just a few short weeks before this). Students should consider the possibility that their own lives can be changed through this same message.

Be sure to bring the on-going list up to date as students contribute to Jesus’ identify and discuss these items. Draw students’ attention to Isaiah 53 for the connection to Isaiah’s “suffering servant.”

Vocabulary: Keep in mind that some students may be unfamiliar with some of the vocabulary in the scripture, even in their own language. Lack of understanding of some of these words and English expressions could cause lack of understanding of important points. Do not teach these words, but be prepared to help students with them when needed.

Acts Chapter 1

vs 1: Pentecost, resurrection,

vs 2: roaring, windstorm,

vs 3: tongues of fire, settled,

vs 5: godly,

vs 6: bewildered, believers,

vs 12: perplexed

vs 7: beside themselves with wonder, exclaimed, Galilee,

vs 22: Israel, publicly, endorsed, miracles, wonders, signs

vs 13: mocking

vs 14: apostles

vs 23: prearranged, lawless, Gentiles, cross

vs 24: horrors, grip,

vs 37: convicted

vs 40: generation, gone astray

vs 42: devoted, fellowship

As you prepare to present this lesson, keep in mind the objectives of the lesson (stated below) and

attempt to achieve all of them.

Scripture: Acts 2:1-15, 22-42

Set

Ask, “Do I speak (whatever the native language is)?” Students may say they don’t know. but, assure them that you do not speak their language. Then ask, “How would you feel if you heard me suddenly talking to you in your own language, and you didn’t need the translator?” Take a few minutes for responses. Then ask, “How would it be possible for this to happen?”

Then go on with the reading of the scripture.

Objectives: Students will

1. Meet Jesus through the miracle of hearing and universal comprehension.
2. Learn how the Holy Spirit, through the disciples, introduced Jesus to all language groups present.
3. Describe how Peter was able to present this message.
4. Observe that Peter’s boldness was a result of the indwelling Holy Spirit.
5. Connect Peter’s message with John the Baptizer’s message.
6. Sum up Peter’s main point.
7. Review God’s prearranged plan.
8. Connect the focus of Peter’s sermon and Isaiah’s prophecy of the Suffering-Servant-King.
9. State the three proofs given by Peter that Jesus was the Messiah.
10. Learn what they, also, must do.
11. Observe the results of the Holy Spirit’s introduction.
12. Learn what is necessary in order to follow Christ.
13. Learn that Peter wanted his listeners to realize that they needed a change of heart.
14. Learn that “repentance” means a change of thinking/heart.
15. Describe Jesus as Suffering Servant in contrast to the triumphant Lord.
16. Discuss the meaning of *Messiah* and conclude that it all happened to save sinners.
17. Conclude that Peter’s facts point to the crucified Jesus as Lord and Messiah.

Objective Questions

The coming of the Holy Spirit --

Acts, Chapter 2

Verses 1-4

1. Who are the characters in these verses?
2. Who are the “believers?”
3. Where are they?
4. What is happening?
5. What was seen?
6. What was the reason for what was heard and seen?
7. Who (or what) is the Holy Spirit?
8. How does this remind you of what John the Baptist said about Jesus?

Peter Speaks and Is Misunderstood --

Verses 5-13

9. Who are the characters in these verses?
10. What was so shocking to these people?
11. How were the believers able to speak to the listeners?
12. What were the believers accused of?
13. But what had really caused the believers behavior?

14. How would this experience have affected you?

Verses 14-15

15. Who has entered the picture in these verses?

16. How did Peter answer the accusations?

Peter's Powerful Sermon --

Verses 22-24

17. Who was speaking through Peter? (vs 1-4)

18. Who is Peter talking to?

19. What are the ways in which we have seen God endorse Jesus before?

20. In verse 22, how does Peter say that God endorsed Jesus?

21. Who gave Jesus the power to do "miracles, wonders, and signs?"

22. How could God have used these things to endorse Jesus?

23. What was God's prearranged plan?

24. What was the outcome of Jesus' death?

Verses 33, 36

25. Where is Jesus in Verse 33? Why?

26. In verse 36, what is it that Peter clearly points out about Jesus?

27. How does this relate to Isaiah 53?

28. What does Peter tell his listeners they must do?

29. What is the promise that Peter talked about in verse 39?

30. How is the Holy Spirit the power for a new life?

Summarizing Questions

1. Sum up Peter's message given in verses 22-38.
2. How does this remind you of what Isaiah said? Of what John the Baptist said?
3. How did Peter's message change the lives of Peter's listeners?
4. What do we know about Jesus thus far? (Look at the on-going list and add to it as appropriate. Review with students the meaning of Jesus' titles and attributes.)

Subjective Questions

1. What does this passage say about Jesus?
2. What does it mean that Jesus is resurrected?
3. What does this mean to you?
4. What does Jesus mean to you?
5. How can this change your life?
6. What does this passage say about God?

Lesson 6
Paul's Challenging Introduction
The Visible Image of the Invisible God

PRINCIPLE THOUGHT

Paul presents what would appear to be two different person whose name is Christ, but not two different persons -- the same Christ, Lord of all -- neither of which is more important; both are crucial when it comes to living out the faith. On the one hand, Christ lives in us to transform us personally. He wants to affect our individual jobs, our families, our local communities, and our personal relationships. On the other hand, Christ is at work globally, using people to transform societies and their systems, confront principalities and powers, and work for public justice and human rights.

Lesson Summary

Paul was constantly pouring out his life and encouraging others to be at one another's disposal in imitation of Christ's generosity.

From Paul's denial of Who Jesus was, we now see in his epistles a man who, from his conversion, was emboldened by the Holy Spirit, to speak of his own conversion and of the power of Jesus. Paul's subsequent messages were "powerful" (Acts 9:22) and convincing to the effect "that Jesus is the Christ."

In many of Paul's letters we see him introducing Jesus, but it can be seen more acutely in Philippians and Colossians.

Paul had a grasp as to Who Jesus was to him personally like no other writer in the New Testament. Paul introduces Jesus to us as God, fulfilling the will of the Father, carrying out the mission, becoming the Savior of the world, our only means of salvation and hope of eternal life -- a well thought out meaning of relationship, life purpose, will, obedience, faith, God becoming a human being -- Jesus is God.

In Philippians, in contrast to the many people today who seek upward mobility, Jesus is portrayed, in a sense, as downwardly mobile (2:5-8), moving from a position of ultimate power to utter powerlessness. In making this transition He set the best possible example of servant-leadership (see Matthew 20:25-28; John 13:2-17). He is Lord of the personal and the private, the One Who speaks to someone's heart. Christ lives in us to transform us personally. He wants to affect our individual jobs, our families, our local communities, and our personal relationships.

In Colossians (1:15-18), Paul offers the Jesus as the cosmic Christ. Paul affirms the divine nature and role of Jesus Christ throughout and makes two major points: 1) Christ is preeminent in relation to the entire creation (vs 15-17) and 2) He is preeminent in relation to humanity and the church because of His resurrection from the dead (vs 18-19). He is Creator of the universe, Sustainer of earth and all of its ecological systems, and Ruler over the competing power networks of the world, and, on the other hand, head of the Church.

The two ways Jesus is portrayed by Paul:

Colossians	Philippians
Christ the <u>Lord</u> : Power over All	Christ the <u>Servant</u> : Lowest of the lowly
1. Main features: Christ is . . . The creator and ruler of the universe, The firstborn of creation, The bodily expression of God, The One Who possesses all authority in heaven and on earth, The “cosmic Christ” who confronts and exposes every opposing principality and power, The Church’s head and source, The Redeemer and Reconciler.	1. Main features: Christ is . . . The model of humility, of “downward mobility,” The model of servant leadership, The obedient Son Who surrenders His power in order to accomplish His task among and on behalf of the powerless, The One Who dies in order to save.

Philippines 5:11

Several key characteristics of Christ are found in verses 5-11.

1. Christ has always existed with God. (vs 6)
2. Christ is equal to God because He is God (John 1:1ff; Colossians 1:15-19); (vs 6)
- 3) Though Christ is God, He became a man in order to fulfill God’s plan of salvation for all people; (vs 6-7)
- 4) Christ did not just have the appearance of being a man – He actually became human to identify with our sins; (vs 8)
- 5) Christ voluntarily laid aside His divine rights and privileges out of love for His Father; (vs 6-7)
- 6) Christ died on the cross for our sins so we wouldn’t have to face eternal death; (vs 8)
- 7) God glorified Christ because of His obedience; (vs 9-10)
- 8) God raised Christ to His original position at the Father’s right hand, where He will reign forever as our Lord and Savior. (vs 11)

Christ Is the Model of Humility, of “Downward Mobility”

Christ was a true example of humility. He laid aside entirely all the privileges which were rightly His. Humility (“be humble”) might be defined as an objective evaluation of oneself in the sight of God and others (Philippians 2:3; compare Romans 12:3; I Peter 3:8, 5:6).

Christ, because of the “mind” that was in Him – the humble, obedient spirit – had put aside all temptation, and had descended, instead of climbing higher. Paul presented Christ Who exemplified perfect love and who exercised it with true knowledge and discernment.

There are various interpretations regarding what Christ actually did in becoming a man (2:7): (1) He emptied Himself of some aspect of His deity (compare James 1:17; Malachi 3:6); (2) He veiled His glory (compare John 17:5; Matthew 17:1-2); (3) He laid aside the independent exercise of some of His attributes (Acts 10:38; Matthew 24:36); (4) He received the form of a servant and became a man.

Christ Is the Model of Servant Leadership

There exists two modes of Christ’s existence: the first in divine glory and splendor, the second as humble servant. Here Paul holds up a contrasted figure who, with the nature of God, became a servant to the lowliest on earth, whom we would consider beneath us. Christ voluntarily gave of Himself, making Himself nothing.

As a human being, Jesus took the humble position of a slave. What appeared on earth was not a prince in a palace, or a royal king, or a wealthy and scholarly teacher; instead, Jesus’ entire life was devoted to serving others (Isaiah 53:2; Mark 10:45).

Jesus is a model of servanthood. This passage holds many parallels to the prophecy of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53. This verse describes the status of Christ as He existed before the creation of the world – that is, His preincarnate state. Jesus Christ was God. Everything God is, Christ is. But Jesus did not demand and cling to His rights as God, but set them aside for a time in order to become human. When Christ was born, God became a man. Jesus was not part man and part God; He was completely human and completely divine. Christ is the perfect expression of God in human form. Jesus Christ was humble, willing to give up His rights in order to obey God and serve people. Christ had a servant's attitude, serving out of love for God and for others.

Christ Is The Obedient Son Who Surrenders His Power in Order to Accomplish His Task Among and on Behalf of the Powerless

Jesus gave up all personal ambitions, all self-seeking impulses, and surrendered Himself without reserve to the will of God. The whole emphasis is laid on an utter self-forgetfulness and selfless obedience to the death of the Cross by which Christ had won for Himself His sovereign place.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the classic example of a caring, humble, obedience (2:5-8). Christ willingly set aside His glory to totally obey the Father's will. Christ divested Himself of His divine state of existence when He relinquished His position of equality with God to take on a subservient role to the Father, which would result in His being sent to earth to assume a new form of being as a man. In this form, He would accomplish redemption by death on the cross (2:8).

Paul suggests that God the creator has had in His nature from all eternity this outgoing, self-giving disposition of mind, which became visible in Christ (Colossians 1:15), reaching down to individuals in order to lift each one out of self into a new union with the selfless life of God. There is dynamite in this picture of the Creator's eternal interest in each human personality.

Because Jesus did not cling to His equality with God (2:6) but willingly obeyed God in order to carry out the plan of salvation, God honored that obedience by giving Jesus the Name above all names (vs 9).

Christ Is The One Who Dies in Order to Save

Paul presented the supreme illustration of humility: Christ's example of sacrificing Himself for others.

Instead of aspiring higher, He abandoned everything which He rightly possessed. He exchanged the form of God for that of man. He suppressed Himself so utterly that He died at last on the Cross because of the divine compassion for mankind (John 3:16), Jesus died as One Who was cursed (Galatians 3:13).

The basic truth of Christianity is that Jesus Christ is Lord.

God raised Christ up to the heights of heaven. He did not leave Christ in the grave but raised Him from the dead, brought Him back up to heaven, and glorified Him (see Acts 2:33; Ephesians 1:20-22; Hebrews 1:3). God gave Jesus all authority (Matthew 28:18; John 5:27) and made Him the Lord of both the dead and the living (Romans 14:9). In every way Christ will be acknowledged as Lord and no longer as servant (2:7).

Jesus' glorification came as the result of His self-humiliation and obedience (Psalms 8:5, 6, 110:1, 7; Matthew 28:18; Luke 24:26; John 5:27, 10:17; Romans 14:9; Ephesians 1:20-22; Hebrews 2:9).

Christ is our example, teaching us first to humble ourselves and submit to God's will before we expect to be exalted (2:3, 5:3-21; I Peter 5:5,6).

Colossians 1:15-23

In Colossians we see the contrast between the “suffering servant” to the cosmic Christ Who is in control of the world and its people.

Christ Is the Bodily Expression of God

Jesus is not only equal to God (Philippians 2:6), He is God (John 10:30, 38, 12:45, 14:1-11); as the visible image of the invisible God. The Son of God has always been God’s expression. He is the One in the Godhead Who explains, defines, and shines out God. He is called “the Word” (John 1:1). He resembles, represents, and reveals the invisible God in and to the world (John 1:18). “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father,” Jesus said (John 14:9). God as Spirit is invisible and always will be (I Timothy 6:16). He is the embodiment of true humanity, as He is the embodiment of true kingship – the reality in whom all ideals and aspirations are fulfilled.

The Son is God manifest, the bearer of the might and majesty of God, the revealer and mediator of the creating and sustaining power of the Godhead in relation to the world. We have in these words the triple association of creation, sovereignty, and the divine image.

Christ Is the Firstborn of Creation

Christ is preeminent as the firstborn and the image of God. Christ existed before all these elements of creation and indeed they even depend on Him for their existence (Colossians 1:17). The Son in His humanity is now the foremost creature of all creation -- the firstborn of every creature – or, “the premier of all creation.”

He is supreme over all creation. All things were created through Christ (John 1:3). Christ existed before everything else began, before God made anything at all. He is not only the Creator of the world, He is also its Sustainer. By Him everything came to be, and by Him everything is held together, protected, and prevented from disintegrating into chaos (see Acts 17:28). Because Christ is the Sustainer of all life, nothing in creation is independent from Him. In Him alone and by His word, we find the unifying principle of all of life (Hebrews 1:2-3).

We are all His servants who must daily trust Him to protect us, care for us, and sustain us. The Son of man is the chiefborn among all God’s creatures. (See Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 21:16, 17; Psalm 89:23) Thus, He has all the priority and authority of the firstborn prince in a king’s household (Hebrews 1:2). He came from heaven, not from the dust of the earth (I Corinthians 15:47), and He is Lord of all (Romans 9:5, 10:12; Revelation 1:5, 17:14).

Christ Is the Ruler of the Universe

In “all things” (vs 18) He has the preeminence. Christ is preeminent because God was pleased for the fullness of the cosmos to dwell in Him and through Him to reconcile all things in the cosmos.

Christ fully represents God, not only in the creation of all things (1:15-16), but also in the ongoing operation and reconciliation of the cosmos (1:17-20).

The very fullness of God dwells in Him (1:19); in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily (2:9). Christ in Whom the true “fullness” of deity dwells, has “reconciled us precisely in His body of flesh” (1:22).

The Church’s Head and Source

Paul now turns to the second part of his exposition of the cosmic significance of Christ – the place of Christ in human life and human history. Christ is the head of the body, the Church.

While verses 15-17 unveil the Son’s relationship to the old creation (the world), from verse 18 onward describes His relationship to the new creation, the church. He is the church’s Head and source. He is the church’s beginning because He is the firstborn from the dead. The church was created through Christ’s resurrection.

Jesus' resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith, the reason that the church even exists. Only Christianity has a God Who became human, died for His people, and raised again in power and glory to rule the old creation and the new creation forever.

The Redeemer and Reconciler

Paul openly proclaims the way of salvation to be through Christ alone. Jesus' resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. Jesus was raised from death, and His resurrection proves His Lordship over the material world.

"First-born from the dead" recalls the world of I Corinthians 15:20: "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept." "Christ being raised from the dead dies no more; death hath no more dominion over Him" (Romans 6:9). His resurrection inaugurates for man a new life.

The progression of thought is from Christ as the image of God (1:15), to His rank in creation (1:16-17), to His rank in the church (1:18). His rank in the church comes from His fullness of deity (1:19). All the "fullness" of God (1:19) dwells in Christ.

He reconciled everything to Himself. He redeemed us from the power of sin and reconciled us to God. This reconciliation was accomplished through Christ's blood on the cross. The goal of reconciliation is to bring Jesus' people into the very presence of God, holy and blameless, without a single fault, to transform their character so they can live consistent with their faith. ("Reconciliation" means reestablishing a relationship, causing a relationship to become friendly and peaceable when it had not been so.)

Teacher Helps

These two passages from Philippians and from Colossians give us an introduction to God through Jesus. It is through Jesus that we know God. Paul introduces Jesus as the visible image of an invisible God. The selection from Colossians presents Jesus as the Son of God – again the King. Paul presents in these scriptures Christ's mission on earth. In presenting this lesson follow the suggestions below and in this sequence.

1. First, after studying the entire scripture, decide to use either the suggested "Set" given below or come up with one of your own. Have students participate in the "Set" which will establish in their thinking the idea of the importance of an image (a photograph or painting) which illustrates what someone looks like. Another suggestion that gets across this same idea is how important it is to know what someone looks like whom the student is meeting at the airport on an incoming flight.

2. Second, read and discuss Philippians 2:5 which is focused on the attitude of Jesus. Students should speculate about what Jesus' attitude is. They should have some idea by this time what Jesus is like.

3. Third, read and discuss Philippians 2:6-11. This is the heart of what Jesus' attitude is. From this students can compare their answers to the question surrounding verse 5. Following the model of Jesus' attitude, they can then deal with what their own attitudes should be. The point here is that Jesus is the model for our lives.

5. Last, read and discuss Colossians 1:15-23. In these verses we see Jesus as God, as the creator and controller of everything. He is shown indeed as Master and Lord. Students should derive from these verses a clear introduction to Jesus and God. Paul presents here the promise of God through Jesus in changing lives. Students will see here what believing the truth about Jesus and God can mean in their lives.

Be sure to bring the on-going list up to date as students contribute to Jesus' identify and discuss these items. Draw students' attention to Isaiah 53 for the connection to Isaiah's "suffering servant."

Vocabulary: There may be problems with some of the words in the scripture that students are unfamiliar with, even in their own language. Do not teach these words, but be prepared to help students with them when needed. The following words and ideas may be stumbling blocks to students'

understanding:

Philippians Chapter 2

vs 5: attitude,

vs 6: cling,

vs 7: slave,

vs 8: obediently, criminal,

vs 9: heights,

vs 16: authorities,

vs 18: head of the church

vs 20: reconciled,

vs 21: evil,

vs 22: presence, blameless, holy, fault,

vs 23: firmly, drift away, assurance, Good

News, appointed, proclaim.

Colossians Chapter 1

vs 15: visible, image, invisible,

supreme,

As you prepare to present this lesson, keep in mind the objectives of the lesson (stated below) and attempt to achieve all of them.

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-11; Colossians 1:15-23

Set

Take with you a photograph of a member of your family (someone who present isn't with you). First, without showing them the picture, ask students what your (daughter, son, etc.) looks like. Insist that they should guess. (Obviously they won't know.) Then show them the picture and ask the same question. Then ask them why the photograph was important. (The answer should be obvious.)

Then tell them they are going to read something about this idea.

Objectives: Students will

1. Meet Jesus as Savior of the World.
2. Meet Jesus as God the Son.
3. Meet Jesus as Creator, Sustainer of the universe.
4. Observe the two different views of Jesus presented by Paul -- Jesus at work in us personally and Jesus at work in the world.
5. Discuss the connection of Paul's two different views of Christ with Isaiah's Suffering-Servant-King.
6. Observe that Jesus is the model for humility and personal relationships.
7. Observe that Jesus in His full humanity showed us everything about God's character in His role of servant leadership.
8. Observe that Christ has always existed with God.
9. Observe that Jesus became a man in order to fulfill God's plan of salvation.
10. Observe that Christ voluntarily laid aside His divine rights and privileges out of love for and obedience to His Father.
11. Observe that Christ died on the cross for our sins.
12. Observe that God glorified Christ because of His obedience.
13. Observe that God raised Christ to His original position.
14. Learn that Christ is Lord of all.
15. Observe that Christ fully represents God.
16. Observe that Jesus is equal to God because He is God.
17. Learn that Christ is the sustainer of all life and must be depended upon for care, protection, and sustenance.
18. Learn that Christ's resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith.

19. Learn that Christ is preeminent in relation to humanity and the church because of the resurrection from the dead.
20. Discuss the meaning of “reconciliation” and apply it to their own lives.

Objective Questions

Paul Presents Jesus as the Visible image of an invisible God --

Philippians 2: 5-11

Verse 5

1. What does “attitude” mean?
2. What do you think is the attitude that Christ had?
3. If your attitude is modeled on Christ’s, what will your attitude be?

Verses 6-11

4. In verses 6-7-8 what was the characteristic of Christ? (What was His attitude, based on this? What kind of person was He?)
5. What is the contrast between verses 6-8 and verses 9-11? Why? (E.g., what was Jesus in vs 6-8 and what is He now in vs 8-11?)
6. If your attitude should be the same as Christ’s, then what should be your attitude?
7. How does this compare with what Isaiah said?
8. How can one man be both?

Paul Presents Jesus as the Son of God --

Colossians 1:15-23

Verses 15-17

9. What is known about Jesus thus far? (Review the list of what students have offered about Jesus. Go over and discuss the meaning of each item.)
10. Which of these attributes of Jesus fits the description in these verses? Why?
11. From what we know about Jesus, if He is the “visible image of the invisible God,” (vs 15), (pointing back to the list) what do we know about God? (You may need to discuss the meaning of “visible,” “invisible,” and particularly “image.”)
12. From these verses, what do we know about God?
13. In verses 15 and 16, who is “He?” Who is “Him” in verse 16? And “He” in verse 17?
14. How do these verses reflect verses 9-10-11 from Philippians chapter 2?
15. Who created everything? (vs 16)
16. Who is in charge of everything that has ever been created?
17. How could Jesus have existed before everything else began? (vs 17)
19. How does this make you feel?

Verses 18-23

20. Who is speaking in these verses? (vs 23)
21. What was Paul’s role? (this will be important in the next lesson.)
22. What is the relationship between God and Christ?
23. In verse 20, what does “reconciled” mean? (vs 21-22)
24. How did God bring about this reconciliation? (vs 22)
25. Examine the on-going list for the “Prince of Peace” and discuss reconciliation further relative to Jesus.
26. Who were Jesus’ “enemies?” (vs 21) His “friends?” (vs 22)
27. What is “this truth” in verse 23? Why is it important to continue believing in “this truth?”
28. What do you think the “Good News” is that is mentioned in verse 23?

Summarizing Questions

1. Sum up what you have learned about Jesus from this lesson. (Make a list.)
2. From these scriptures, how has Jesus changed lives?

Subjective Questions

1. What in this scripture has impressed you most? Why?
2. What does this passage say about Jesus?
3. How can this knowledge about Jesus help you in your life?
4. How can Jesus change your life?
5. What does it mean that Jesus is “the visible image of the invisible God?”
6. So what does this say about God?
7. What does it say *to you personally* about God?

Lesson 7
Testimonies of Mature Christians
The Savior

PRINCIPLE THOUGHT

The true knowledge of Jesus has its basis in the faith testimony of others who establish His history. The object of faith is Jesus Christ. Jesus is both truly God and truly man – He came in the flesh, became God’s true witness, to save sinners. The security of believers is tied up in this thought. The believer should not doubt that he has received both forgiveness for past sins and strength to bear up under present trials because Jesus intercedes between God and people. The relationship between the Son of God and life is absolute and exclusive. To possess Him in intimate relationship means life; to lack Him means spiritual death. Life in Him means victory.

Lesson Summary

The writers of the New Testament remarkably tell one unified story:

1. They offer the same understanding of God throughout. He is one God, Creator, Savior, and Judge. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and eternal. His character is holy, good, loving, and just.
2. They offer the same understanding of human nature. People are made in God’s image and are capable of great good. Yet they are also sinful and capable of great wickedness. The great need of humanity is to be reconciled to God and to each other.
3. They offer a common understanding of Jesus Christ. He is both God and man. He became a real human being in order to show the world the God it could not otherwise perceive. Something deeply significant happened as a result of His death on the cross, making it possible for God and humanity to be reconciled.
4. They offer the same hope. God will accomplish His purposes for His Creation.

Even with areas of agreement each writer has had a unique relationship and unique experiences with Jesus Christ and testify of these uniquenesses. In this concluding lesson, we are introduced to Jesus by four writers, all of whom were first disciples of Jesus and then apostles – John, Simon Peter, Paul, and the writer of Hebrews (possibly Paul). They obeyed Jesus even to the point of giving their lives for Him. Each introduces Jesus out of a unique experience and relationship. These witnesses desire that each of us will truly become intimately acquainted with Jesus, serve Him faithfully, love Him dearly, and introduce Him to our family members, friends, and neighbors.

Hebrews 4:14-16 (possibly the Apostle Paul):

It was important to this writer to know (and to testify of this to us) that we have in heaven an Advocate/Mediator with God the Father. He discusses Jesus’ qualifications to be our great High Priest.

1. Jesus gave His life and died as the final sacrifice for sin. Now people can approach God directly because of Jesus’ sacrifice for sins. Because Christ fulfilled the law and paid sin’s penalty for us, He can plead for us on the basis of justice as well as mercy. When God raised Christ from the dead, He accepted once for all Christ’s plea for our acquittal (see Romans 4:23-25).
2. Jesus has gone to heaven and has unrestricted access to God the Father. His being seated at God’s right hand denotes His power to save us, His intercession, His will to do it.
3. Jesus intercedes between God and people as the sinless Son of God, human yet divine. Jesus experienced life completely: He grew tired, became hungry, and faced normal human limitations. Thus Jesus understands our weaknesses.. He faced all of the same temptations we do, yet He did not sin.
4. Jesus has authority because He is both man and God. As humanity’s representative, He

intercedes for us before God. As God's representative, He assures us of God's forgiveness.

5. Jesus' death opened the way for sinful people to reach a Holy God. Now people can approach God directly because of Jesus' sacrifice for sins. God listens, cares, and will answer in His perfect way, in His perfect timing.

Revelation 1:17-18

As the Roman government stepped up its persecution of Christians, the Apostle John must have wondered if the church could survive and stand against the opposition. But Jesus appeared in glory and splendor, reassuring John that he and his fellow believers had access to God's strength to face these trials. Jesus reminded John that

He [Jesus] holds the keys of death and the grave. He alone can free us from eternal bondage to Satan. He alone has the power and authority to get us free from sin's control. Believers don't have to fear death or the grave because Christ holds the keys to both. The risen Lord exhibits His full authority to command.

God lives from eternity and endures through eternity ("I am the first and he last" vs 17). God is unchanging.

Jesus has life and is the source of life for all His people. Because Jesus passed through death as a man and now lives in resurrection, His people can rest assured that He is the way to resurrection and eternal life.

II Peter 1:16-18

Peter encountered skepticism as he presented the Gospel in the first century. Some said that Peter's claims about Jesus were nothing but cleverly devised fables – a charge he vehemently denied (vs 16). Here Peter, who was an eye witness, refers to the Transfiguration where Jesus' divine identity was revealed to him and two other disciples, James and John (see Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36). Peter had seen Jesus' majestic splendor with his own eyes when Jesus' divine identity had been revealed by God – audibly and visually. At the Transfiguration, the three disciples received a foretaste of what Christ would be like in glory and what eternity with Him would be like. Peter emphasized his authority as an eyewitness as well as the God-inspired authority of Scripture to prepare the way for his harsh words against the false teachers.

The Transfiguration was God's divine affirmation of everything Jesus had done and was about to do. The Transfiguration assured the disciples that their commitment was well placed and their eternity was secure. Jesus was truly the Messiah, the divine Son of God.

The Transfiguration obviously had had a profound impact on Peter. It was an anchor for Peter's faith. As he prepared for his death, his last words of assurance to future believers focused on the reliability of the Gospel. Peter knew that his eternal glory was sure, for he had seen it with his own eyes. Thus, he could assure all believers that they too would one day share in this glory.

I Timothy 1:12-17

The Apostle Paul was reminded of his own sin; he called himself "the worst" of sinners, yet God came to him offering grace, mercy, and a new start, even as Paul set out to capture more Christians. Looking back, Paul realized Jesus' great patience in dealing with him. But instead of allowing that memory to overwhelm him, Paul overflowed with gratefulness that God had considered him trustworthy and had appointed him to serve in spreading the Good News of salvation to his fellow men. Paul bursts into a doxology of praise in verse 17 -- *God is the absolute Ruler of all time and ages, the One who is life Himself.*

As a result, Paul summarizes the Good News:

1. Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
2. No sinner is beyond His saving power.

3. Jesus offers mercy for all those who come to Him. (See Luke 5:32 for Jesus' purpose for being on earth.) Jesus didn't come merely to show us how to live a better life or to challenge us to be better people. He came to offer us salvation that leads to eternal life.
4. God's undeserved favor toward us is always greater than any words we may use to describe it.

Paul, a little later in *I Timothy* (3:16), outlines and affirms the humanity and divinity of Christ. By so doing, Paul revealed the heart of the Gospel.

Paul presents Christ's accomplished work.

1. Christ appeared in the flesh. Jesus was a man; His incarnation provides the basis for our being right with God (Philippians 2:7-8; see also Romans 1:3).
2. He was shown to be righteous by the Spirit. Jesus' resurrection showed that the Holy Spirit's power was in Him (Acts 2:32-33).

Paul presents Christ's work being made known to angels and man.

3. He was seen by angels – Jesus is divine and exalted. (Philippians 2:0; see also Colossians 2:15; Hebrews 1:6). Presumably, the entire drama of the Incarnation was a spectacle for the angels. They were witnesses and heralds of His coming. But, the role of the angels and their exposure to Christ exceeds His time on earth.
4. He was announced to the nations, pointing to the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel (Colossians 1:23).

Paul presents the response of the world and of heaven to His work.

5. He was believed on in the world. Christ is not only preached among all nations, but He also is believed all across the world. This points to a continual fulfillment today as Christ is still preached in nations that have not heard of Him.
6. He was taken up into heaven. This refers to the Ascension: “. . . The same One who came down is the One who ascended higher than all the heavens, so that His rule might fill the entire universe” (Ephesians 4:10).

I John 5:6-12

In this testimony the Apostle John affirms Jesus divinity. There was a story going around that Jesus was only the “Christ” between His baptism and His crucifixion. Before and after He was “just” another human being! John's testimony is an attempt to refute this story, as follows:

1. Jesus is the divine Son of God. The Gospels twice record God's clear declaration that Jesus was His Son – at Jesus' baptism (Matthew 3:16-17) and at His transfiguration (Matthew 17:5). And at His crucifixion, Jesus was recognized by others as God's Son (see Mark 15:39). In His resurrection, Jesus was designated the Son of God in power (Romans 1:3-4). Each event demonstrated that Jesus was the divine Son of God. If Jesus died only as a man, He could not have taken upon Himself the sins for the world, and Christianity would be an empty religion.
2. God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. The divine, eternal life resides in Christ, Who makes it available to all who believe in Him. That Jesus is indeed God's Son has been established by testimony from God Himself (5:7-9).
3. God is always truthful and always faithful. Believers must follow Christ and exhibit His presence in their lives to prove the validity of their faith.
4. Whoever believes in God's Son has eternal life. God's witness is that He has given us eternal life, life of the highest quality, but the sole mediator of it is His Son.
5. Christ is both truly God and man. Jesus is both Messiah and Son of God.

Teacher Helps

This is the final lesson of the introductions of Jesus. Therefore, during the discussion of this final lesson there needs to be a review of the other six lessons, a “pulling together” of all the lessons, a summing up. Students should come to realize that all of the introductions fit together and present a unified picture of Jesus as Savior and Lord. In this summarizing attempt, feel free to refer back to any and all preceding lessons.

This lesson, from the testimonies of the Apostle Paul, the Apostle John, the Apostle Peter, and from the writer of Hebrews, all who died for Jesus Christ, presents Jesus in different ways but with the same message – believing in Jesus’ as Savior and Lord changes lives. It is suggested that you proceed in the following way.

1. First, after studying the scripture passages, decide to use either the “Set” given below or come up with one of your own. Have students participate in the “Set” which will establish in their thinking the idea that it is necessary to obtain information from several testimonies in order to obtain a full picture of someone they do not know.

2. Second, read and discuss I Timothy 1:12-17. This is Paul’s testimony that God through His great mercy changed his life. This presents God as merciful, just, and is able to forgive even the worst of sinners. Students need to be reminded of this.

3. Third, read and discuss Hebrews 4:14-16. The writer of the book of Hebrews presents Jesus as our advocate and mediator before God. Have students review Jesus’ temptation and how this helps Jesus to understand our human weaknesses and makes Him a powerful advocate for us.

4. Fourth, read and discuss Revelation 1:17-18. The Apostle John records here that Christ is all-powerful because He overcame death. If Jesus had not been raised from the dead, the rest of the story would be meaningless -- just a story.

5. Fifth, read and discuss II Peter 1:16-18. Peter testifies to his experience at the Transfiguration, which students read about in an earlier lesson. Peter points out here the power and the glory which he experienced in witnessing Jesus being changed and God speaking. Peter introduces Jesus here as the Son of God.

6. Sixth, read and discuss I John 5:6-12. The Apostle John here sums up the clues that are available to us for the fact of Jesus’ life and mission – His baptism, His death, and His resurrection. John points out that it is true because God is Truth. John also points out the necessity and the benefit of “believing” in this truth – that Jesus Christ is God’s Son and is the Savior of the world.

7. Last, read and discuss I Timothy 3:16. Paul, in one verse, sums up Who Christ is and what His mission is.

Be sure to bring the on-going list up-to-date as students contribute to Jesus’ identify and discuss these items. Draw students’ attention to Isaiah 53 for the connection to Isaiah’s “suffering servant.”

Vocabulary: There may be problems with some of the words in the scripture that students are unfamiliar with, even in their own language. Do not teach these words, but be prepared to help students with them when needed. The following words and ideas may be stumbling blocks to students’ understanding:

I Timothy Chapter 1

vs 12: trustworthy, appointing

vs 13: scoff, hunted down, harming, mercy, ignorance, unbelief

vs 14: gracious, faith

vs 15: a true saying, sinners

vs 16: prime example, patience, realize,

vs 17: glory and honor

Hebrews Chapter 4

vs 14: High Priest, cling

vs 15: weaknesses, temptations

vs 16: boldly, throne, gracious

Revelation Chapter 1

II Peter Chapter 1

vs 16: clever, majestic splendor

vs 17: glorious, majestic, heaven, beloved

vs 18: holy mountain

I John Chapter 5

vs 6: revealed, shedding, testimony

vs 7: witnesses,\

vs 9: testified

vs 10: liar

vs 17: First and the Last
vs 18: forever

I Timothy 3:16
without question, mystery, righteous, Spirit

As you prepare to present this lesson, keep in mind the objectives of the lesson (stated below) and attempt to achieve all of them.

Scripture: I Timothy 1:12-17, 3:16; Hebrews 4:14-16; Revelation 1:17-18; II Peter 1:16-18;
I John 5:6-12

Set

Ask, "What is a witness?" (Take responses.) "How important is a witness in a court of law?" (Take responses.) "What kind of character is desirable in a witness?" (Take responses.)

Tell students that you want them to quickly draw a picture of a man based on the description given by five witnesses who saw this man whom they saw kill someone.

1. The first witness said the man is quite tall and thin.
2. The second witness said the man had very dark hair.
3. The third witness said the man was not heavy.
4. The fourth witness said the man had thinning hair.
5. The fifth witness said the man was light skinned.

Compare pictures. Ask, "What is the problem?" OR "Is there a problem?" "What is important about the description of each of these witnesses? (Desirable response is that each one contributed to the whole picture.)

Then say, "Let's read about a similar situation from five witnesses."

Objectives: Students will

1. Observe that Jesus changed lives.
2. Conclude that Jesus can change their lives.
3. Observe that no matter how guilt-stricken they are of their past, God forgives and accepts, offering to the worst of sinners grace, mercy, and a new start.
4. Learn that no sinner is beyond God's saving power.
5. Learn that through Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection, He opened for sinful people access to God.
6. Learn that Jesus faithfully intercedes between God and all people who trust in Him.
7. Learn that because of Jesus' humanity, He understands our weaknesses, our struggles, and our temptations.
8. Learn that Jesus gives people sufficient power to deal with life.
9. Learn that because Jesus passed through death as a man and now lives in resurrection, His people can rest assured that He is the way to resurrection and eternal life.
10. Observe that the witness of events and people testify to the reality of Jesus.
11. Observe that God's Spirit witnesses to the fact that everything Jesus said and did was true.
12. Observe that God is truthful and always faithful.
13. Learn that to believe and have eternal life is to have personal faith in, and to commit oneself to, the person of the Son of God.

Objective Questions

The Testimony of the Apostle Paul --

I Timothy 1:12-17

Verses 12-14

1. Who are the characters in these verses? (Of course, no one will know; clue “I” means it is the writer. Bring students’ attention back to the last part of the last verse in the lesson on Paul’s Introduction, pointing out Paul’s role.)
2. What is Paul talking about in these three verses?
3. What is he saying about himself?
4. What did Paul do that was so terrible? (Why did he think he was the “worst?”)
5. What did God do for Paul? (What does “mercy” mean?)

Verses 15-17

6. Why did Jesus come into the world?
7. What was God’s purpose in turning Paul around?
8. What does Paul’s example mean for the worst of people?
9. What does it mean for you?
10. How does Paul give thanks?

The Testimony of the writer of Hebrews --

Hebrews 4:14-16

11. What is a “High Priest?/Advocate do in everyday life? (Or = what is an advocate?)
12. What is Jesus’ role as our advocate in heaven?
13. How did Jesus’ advocacy relate to God’s mercy?
14. How does Jesus’ advocacy relate to Paul’s testimony?
15. How does Jesus’ humanity help Him as our advocate? (vs 15)
16. What is the result of coming to God?
17. What does that mean to you?

The Testimony of the Apostle John --

Revelation 1:17-18

18. What is our assurance that Jesus is always there for us?

The Testimony of the Apostle Peter --

II Peter 1:16-18

19. What have we read that this reminds you of?
20. How does the telling of it the second time seem different?
21. What do these verses add to the story of the Transfiguration?
22. How do these verses assure you about Jesus?
23. What do they say about Jesus?

The Testimony of the Apostle John --

I John 5:6-12

24. Who (or what) are the various witnesses in these verses that testify to Jesus Christ? (List them and discuss each one. Connect each with one of the preceding lessons.)
25. What do these witnesses tell us about Jesus?
26. What is the benefit of knowing this?
27. What is the result of believing in the Son of God? (vs 11) NOT believing in the Son of God? (vs 12)
28. How do you interpret “eternal life?” (vs 11)
29. When did Christ appear in the flesh?
30. When did the Spirit show Jesus to be righteous?
31. When was Christ seen by angels?
32. When was He announced to the nations?
33. What evidence do we have that He was believed on in the world?
34. What evidence do we have that He was taken up into heaven?
35. How is this meaningful to you?

Summarizing Questions

1. What do we know about Jesus from these passages? (Make a list for discussion.)

2. Using the on-going list of Jesus' titles and attributes, ask the following questions:
 - a. Who is Jesus?
 - b. What was His purpose in coming into the world?
 - c. Who sent Him into the world?
 - d. How was His purpose fulfilled?
 - e. Where is He now?
 - f. What is He doing now?
 - h. What did this mean for those who knew Him?
 - g. What does it mean to "believe" in Jesus?
 1. What is the benefit of believing in Jesus?

Subjective Questions

1. What does it mean *to you* to "believe" in Him?
2. What does all this (titles and attributes) mean for you?
3. What does it mean that Jesus is the Suffering Servant-King?
4. What is the result for humans that Jesus is the Suffering Servant-King?
5. What is the result for *your life* that Jesus is the Suffering Servant-King?
6. How can He be King in your life?
7. What do these lessons say about God?
8. What does God mean to you personally?

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APPENDIX A

Lesson 1

ISAIAH'S INTRODUCTION

Isaiah's Introduction

The Suffering Servant-King

Isaiah 7:14

. . . The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call Him Immanuel – God is with us.”

Isaiah 9:6-7

⁶ . . . And the government will rest on His shoulders. These will be His royal titles: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ His ever expanding, peaceful government will never end. He will rule forever with fairness and justice from the throne of His ancestor David. The passionate commitment of the Lord Almighty will guarantee this!

Isaiah 53:2-12

² My servant grew up in the Lord's presence like a tender green shoot, sprouting from a root in dry and sterile ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about His appearance, nothing to attract us to Him.

³ He was despised and rejected — a man of sorrows, acquainted with bitterest grief. We turned our backs on Him and looked the other way when He went by. He was despised, and we did not care.

⁴ Yet it was our weaknesses He carried; it was our sorrows that weighed Him down. And we thought His troubles were a punishment from God for His own sins!

⁵ But He was wounded and crushed for our sins. He was beaten that we might have peace. He was whipped, and we were healed!

⁶ All of us have strayed away like sheep. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the Lord laid on Him the guilt and sins of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet He never said a word. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, He did not open His mouth.

⁸ From prison and trial they led Him away to His death. But who among the people realized that He was dying for their sins — that He was suffering their punishment?

⁹ He had done no wrong, and He never deceived anyone. But He was buried like a criminal; He was put in a rich man's grave.

¹⁰ But it was the Lord's good plan to crush Him and fill Him with grief. Yet when His life is made an offering for sin, He will have a multitude of children, many heirs. He will enjoy a long life, and the Lord's plan will prosper in His hands.

¹¹ When He sees all that is accomplished by His anguish, He will be satisfied. And because of what He has experienced, My righteous servant will make it possible for many to be counted righteous, for He will bear all their sins.

¹² I will give Him the honors of One Who is mighty and great, because He exposed Himself to death. He was counted among those who were sinners. He bore the sins of many and interceded for sinners.

Isaiah 9:2

² The people who walk in darkness will see a great light — a light that will shine on all who live in the land where death casts its shadow.

Excerpted from: *Holy Bible: New Living Translation*. Tyndale Publishing, Inc: Wheaton, IL, 1996

APPENDIX B

Lesson 2

INTRODUCTIONS OF THOSE PRESENT AT HIS BIRTH

Luke 2:25-35

²⁵ Now there was a man named Simeon who lived in Jerusalem. He was a righteous man and very devout. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he eagerly expected the Messiah to come and rescue Israel.

²⁶ The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah.

²⁷ That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required,

²⁸ Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ "Lord, now I can die in peace! As You promised me,

³⁰ I have seen the Savior

³¹ You have given to all people.

³² He is a Light to reveal God to the nations, and He is the Glory of your people Israel!"

³³ Joseph and Mary were amazed at what was being said about Jesus.

³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, "This Child will be rejected by many in Israel, and it will be their undoing. But He will be the greatest joy to many others.

³⁵ Thus, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul."

Excerpted from: *Holy Bible: New Living Translation*. Tyndale Publishing, Inc: Wheaton, IL, 1996

Introductions of Those Present at His Birth

(Jesus – the Messiah)

Matthew 1:18

⁸ Now this is how Jesus the Messiah was born . . .

Luke 1:26-35, 38

²⁶ . . . God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee,

²⁷ to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David.

²⁸ Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"

²⁹ Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean.

³⁰ "Don't be frightened, Mary," the angel told her, "for God has decided to bless you!"

³¹ You will become pregnant and have a son, and you are to name Him Jesus.

³² He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give Him the throne of His ancestor David.

³³ And He will reign over Israel forever; His Kingdom will never end!"

³⁴ Mary asked the angel, "But how can I have a baby? I am

a virgin.”

³⁵ The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby born to you will be holy, and He will be called the Son of God.”

³⁸ Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant, and I am willing to accept whatever He wants. May everything you have said come true.” And then the angel left.

Matthew 1:19-25

¹⁹ Joseph, her fiancé, being a just man, decided to break the engagement quietly, so as not to disgrace her publicly.

²⁰ As he considered this, he fell asleep, and an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to go ahead with your marriage to Mary. For the child within her has been conceived by the Holy Spirit.

²¹ And she will have a Son, and you are to name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

²² All of this happened to fulfill the Lord’s message through His prophet:

²³ “Look! The virgin will conceive a child!
She will give birth to a son,
and He will be called Immanuel
(meaning, God is with us).”

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord commanded. He brought Mary home to be his wife,

²⁵ but she remained a virgin until her son was born. And Joseph named Him Jesus.

Luke 2:6-7, 8-11

The Suffering Servant-King

⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born.

⁷ She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped Him snugly in strips of cloth and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the village inn.

⁸ That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep.

⁹ Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terribly frightened,

¹⁰ but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news of great joy for everyone!”

¹¹ The Savior — yes, the Messiah, the Lord — has been born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David!”

Luke 1:67-75

⁶⁷ Then . . . Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy:

⁶⁸ “Praise the Lord, the God of Israel, because He has visited His people and redeemed them.

⁶⁹ He has sent us a mighty Savior from the royal line of His servant David,

⁷⁰ just as He promised through His holy prophets long ago.

⁷¹ Now we will be saved from our enemies and from all who hate us.

⁷² He has been merciful to our ancestors by remembering His sacred covenant with them,

⁷³ the covenant He gave to our ancestor Abraham.

⁷⁴ We have been rescued from our enemies, so we can serve God without fear,

⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness forever.”

APPENDIX C

Lesson 3

JOHN THE BAPTIZER'S INTRODUCTION

John the Baptizer's Introduction

(The Lamb of God)

Luke 1:57, 59-60, 67, 76-79

⁵⁷ Now it was time for Elizabeth's baby to be born, and it was a boy.

⁵⁹ When the baby was eight days old, all the relatives and friends . . . wanted to name him Zechariah, after his father.

⁶⁰ But Elizabeth said, "No! His name is John!"

⁶⁷ Then his father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and gave this prophecy:

⁷⁶ "And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord.

⁷⁷ You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins.

⁷⁸ Because of God's tender mercy, the Light from heaven is about to break upon us,

⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace."

Luke 1:80

⁸⁰ John grew up and became strong in spirit. Then he lived out in the wilderness until he began his public ministry to Israel.

Matthew 3:1-2

¹ In those days John the Baptist began preaching in the Judean wilderness. His message was,

² "Turn from your sins and turn to God, because the Kingdom of Heaven is near."

John 1:6-7

⁶ God sent John the Baptist

⁷ to tell everyone about the Light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony.

John 1:8-9, 15

⁸ John himself was not the Light; he was only a witness to the Light.

⁹ The One Who is the True Light, Who gives light to everyone, was going to come into the world.

¹⁵ John pointed Him out to the people. He shouted to the crowds, "This is the One I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming Who is far greater than I am, for He existed long before I did.'"

John 1:29-37

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! There is the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world!

³⁰ He is the One I was talking about when I said, 'Soon a man is coming Who is far greater than I am, for He existed long before I did.'

³¹ I didn't know He was the One, but I have been baptizing with water in order to point Him out to Israel."

³² Then John said, "I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon Him.

³³ I didn't know He was the One, but when God sent me to baptize with water, He told me, 'When you see the Holy Spirit descending and resting upon Someone, He is the One you are looking for. He is the One Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'

³⁴ I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that He is the Son of God."

³⁵ The following day, John was again standing with two of his disciples.

³⁶ As Jesus walked by, John looked at Him and then declared, “Look! There is the Lamb of God!”

³⁷ Then John’s two disciples turned and followed Jesus.

APPENDIX D

Lesson 4

HEAVEN'S INTRODUCTION

Heaven's Introduction

God's Beloved Son

Matthew 3:13-17

¹³ Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John.

¹⁴ But John didn't want to baptize Him. "I am the one who needs to be baptized by You," he said, "so why are You coming to me?"

¹⁵ But Jesus said, "It must be done, because we must do everything that is right." So then John baptized Him.

¹⁶ After His baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on Him.

¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is My beloved Son, and I am fully pleased with Him."

Matthew 4:1-11

¹ Then Jesus was led out into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted there by the Devil.

² For forty days and forty nights He ate nothing and became very hungry.

³ Then the Devil came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, change these stones into loaves of bread."

⁴ But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People need more than bread for their life; they must feed on every Word of God.'"

⁵ Then the Devil took Him to Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple,

⁶ and said, "If You are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, 'He orders His angels to protect You. And they will hold You with their hands to keep You from striking Your foot on a stone.'"

⁷ Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'Do not test the Lord your God.'"

⁸ Next the Devil took Him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed Him the nations of the world and all their glory.

The Suffering Servant-King

⁹ "I will give it all to You," he said, "if You will only kneel down and worship me."

¹⁰ "Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God; serve only Him.'"

¹¹ Then the Devil went away, and angels came and cared for Jesus.

Luke 9:28-36

²⁸ . . . Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a mountain to pray.

²⁹ And as He was praying, the appearance of His face changed, and His clothing became dazzling white.

³⁰ Then two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared and began talking with Jesus.

³¹ They were glorious to see. And they were speaking of how He was about to fulfill God's plan by dying in Jerusalem.

³² Peter and the others were very drowsy and had fallen asleep. Now they woke up and saw Jesus' glory and the two men standing with Him.

³³ As Moses and Elijah were starting to leave, Peter, not even knowing what he was saying, blurted out, "Master, this is wonderful! We will make three shrines — one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

³⁴ But even as he was saying this, a cloud came over them; and terror gripped them as it covered them.

³⁵ Then a Voice from the cloud said, "This is My Son, My Chosen One. Listen to Him."

³⁶ When the voice died away, Jesus was there alone. They didn't tell anyone what they had seen until long after this happened.

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APPENDIX E

Lesson 5

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S INTRODUCTION

The Holy Spirit's Introduction

The Risen Lord

Acts 2:1-4, 5-13, 14-15

¹ On the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after Jesus' resurrection, the believers were meeting together in one place.

² Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty windstorm in the skies above them, and it filled the house where they were meeting.

³ Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them.

⁴ And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.

⁵ Godly Jews from many nations were living in Jerusalem at that time.

⁶ When they heard this sound, they came running to see what it was all about, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers.

⁷ They were beside themselves with wonder. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "These people are all from Galilee,

⁸ and yet we hear them speaking the languages of the lands where we were born!"

¹¹ ". . . speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!"

¹² They stood there amazed and perplexed. "What can this mean?" they asked each other.

¹³ But others in the crowd were mocking. "They're drunk, that's all!" they said.

¹⁴ Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other

apostles and shouted to the crowd, “Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this.

¹⁵ Some of you are saying these people are drunk. It isn’t true! It’s much too early for that. People don’t get drunk by nine o’clock in the morning.”

Acts 2:22-24, 33, 36-42

²² “People of Israel, listen! God publicly endorsed Jesus of Nazareth by doing wonderful miracles, wonders, and signs through Him, as you well know.

²³ But you followed God’s prearranged plan. With the help of lawless Gentiles, you nailed Him to the cross and murdered Him.

²⁴ However, God released Him from the horrors of death and raised Him back to life again, for death could not keep Him in its grip.

³³ Now He sits on the throne of highest honor in heaven, at God’s right hand. And the Father, as He had promised, gave Him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us, just as you see and hear today.

³⁶ So let it be clearly known by everyone in Israel that God has made this Jesus Whom you crucified to be both Lord and Messiah!”

³⁷ Peter’s words convicted them deeply, and they said to him and to the other apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?”

³⁸ Peter replied, “Each of you must turn from your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

³⁹ This promise is to you and to your children, and even to the Gentiles — all who have been called by the Lord our God.”

⁴⁰ Then Peter continued preaching for a long time, strongly urging all His listeners, “Save yourselves from this generation that

has gone astray!”

⁴¹ Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church — about three thousand in all.

⁴² They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, . . .

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APPENDIX F

Lesson 6

PAUL'S CHALLENGING INTRODUCTION

Paul's Challenging Introduction

The Visible Image of the Invisible God

Philippians 2:1, 5-11, 2-4

⁵ Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had.

⁶ Though He was God, He did not demand and cling to His rights as God.

⁷ He made Himself nothing; He took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form.

⁸ And in human form He obediently humbled Himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross.

⁹ Because of this, God raised Him up to the heights of heaven and gave Him a name that is above every other name,

¹⁰ so that at the Name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Colossians 1:15-23

¹⁵ Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before God made anything at all and is supreme over all creation.

¹⁶ Christ is the One through Whom God created everything in heaven and earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see — kings, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities. Everything has been created through Him and for Him.

¹⁷ He existed before everything else began, and He holds all creation together.

¹⁸ Christ is the head of the church, which is His body. He is the first of all Who will rise from the dead, so He is first in everything.

¹⁹ For God in all His fullness was pleased to live in Christ,

²⁰ and by Him God reconciled everything to Himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of His blood on the cross.

²¹ This includes you who were once so far away from God. You were His enemies, separated from Him by your evil thoughts and actions,

²² yet now He has brought you back as His friends. He has done this through His death on the cross in His own human body. As a result, He has brought you into the very presence of God, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault.

²³ But you must continue to believe this truth and stand in it firmly. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed by God to proclaim it.

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APPENDIX G

Lesson 7

TESTIMONIES OF THOSE WHO DIED FOR HIM

Testimonies of Those Who Died for Him

The Savior

I Timothy 1:12-17

¹² How thankful I am to Christ Jesus our Lord for considering me trustworthy and appointing me to serve Him,

¹³ even though I used to scoff at the Name of Christ. I hunted down His people, harming them in every way I could. But God had mercy on me because I did it in ignorance and unbelief.

¹⁴ Oh, how kind and gracious the Lord was! He filled me completely with faith and the love of Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ This is a true saying, and everyone should believe it: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners — and I was the worst of them all.

¹⁶ But that is why God had mercy on me, so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of His great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in Him and receive eternal life.

¹⁷ Glory and honor to God forever and ever. He is the eternal King, the unseen One Who never dies; He alone is God. Amen.

Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ . . . we have a great High Priest [Advocate] Who has gone to heaven, Jesus the Son of God. Let us cling to Him and never stop trusting Him.

¹⁵ This High Priest [Advocate] of ours understands our weaknesses, for He faced all of the same temptations we do, yet He did not sin.

¹⁶ So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive His mercy, and we will find grace to help us

when we need it.

Revelation 1:17-18

¹⁷ When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But He laid His right hand on me and said, “Don’t be afraid! I am the First and the Last.

¹⁸ I am the living One Who died. Look, I am alive forever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and the grave.”

II Peter 1:16-18

¹⁶ . . . we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the power of our Lord Jesus Christ and His coming again. We have seen His majestic splendor with our own eyes.

¹⁷ And He received honor and glory from God the Father when God’s glorious, majestic voice called down from heaven, “This is My beloved Son; I am fully pleased with Him.”

¹⁸ We ourselves heard the voice when we were there with Him on the holy mountain.

I John 5:6-12

⁶ . . . Jesus Christ was revealed as God’s Son by His baptism in water and by shedding His blood on the cross — not by water only, but by water and blood. And the Spirit also gives us the testimony that this is true.

⁷ So we have these three witnesses —

⁸ the Spirit, the water, and the blood — and all three agree.

⁹ Since we believe human testimony, surely we can believe the testimony that comes from God. And God has testified about His Son.

¹⁰ All who believe in the Son of God know that this is true. Those who don’t believe this are actually calling God a liar because they don’t believe what God has testified about His Son.

¹¹ And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

¹² So whoever has God’s Son has life; whoever does not have His Son does not have life.

I Timothy 3:16

¹⁶ Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith: Christ appeared in the flesh and was shown to be righteous by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and was announced to the nations. He was believed on in the world and was taken up into heaven.

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